AMERICAN INSURGENT LEADERS: INSIGHTS FOR CONTEMPORARY WARRIORS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the leadership traits of four American insurgent leaders. Those leaders were Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter from the American Revolutionary War and Nathan Bedford Forrest and John Singleton Mosby from the American Civil War. Marion and Sumter's operations were successful in occupying large numbers of British forces, thus enabling General Nathanael Greene to win a campaign of resistance against the British. Forrest and Mosby constantly threatened Union lines of communication, forcing the Union army to dedicate forces to defense, thus reducing its ability to act against the Confederacy's major armies. The operations of all four men demonstrated the effectiveness of irregular operations as an adjunct of conventional forces. The study concludes that all four leaders possessed a high degree of natural intellect and were significantly influenced by their backgrounds. Notably, none had received any formal military training, and only John Mosby had received a formal civilian education of any significance. The men generally used innovative tactics and conducted decentralized operations that reflected positive leadership traits, but in some cases emotionally-driven reprisals and lapses in discipline revealed negative aspects of their leadership. Enlightened contemporary leaders will gain useful insights from studying these men's lives, operations, and leadership qualities. These insights will assist in developing the independent thinking and adaptive leaders necessary for confronting the complexities of modern warfare.

CONTENTS

Introduction

> *To shape the future force, we must grow leaders who can truly out-think and out innovate adversaries while gaining trust, understanding, and cooperation from our partners in an ever-more complex and dynamic environment.*
>
> - US National Military Strategy 2011

Although much has been written about insurgency over the past decade, there has been little study of American insurgencies or the men who led them. The current counterinsurgency campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq have sparked much debate on how such campaigns are best prosecuted. Little institutional knowledge was available at the outbreak of these insurgencies because of the armed services' natural focus toward conventional wars and because of what Colin Gray describes as the American culture's propensity to forget lessons of the past.[1] America has a substantial history of conducting insurgencies dating back to its founding, but there is little understanding of the men who conducted them. Much has been written of their sensational and heroic exploits, but there is limited study of the fighting styles or leadership qualities. Examining how these men fought and led should provide helpful insights for modern warriors that will help them understand insurgent fighters. Thus, this study will answer the following question: "What lessons do American insurgent leaders provide to contemporary warriors?"

Understanding the enemy's thought process is critical to the success of any war. By examining the leadership characteristics of American insurgents, today's military leaders should be able to obtain a useful understanding of insurgent thinking from an American point of view. Although such an understanding will have to be adjusted for foreign cultures, gaining insight into the general qualities of insurgent leadership can still be valuable.

This study will focus on four American insurgent leaders. It will first examine the operations of Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter in the Carolinas during the American Revolutionary War. It will then assess the operations of Nathan Bedford Forrest and John Singleton Mosby during the American Civil War. This broad overview, covering distinctly different periods in time and methods of warfare, will examine how insurgent warfare has

[1] Colin Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 90.

evolved and what elements have remained largely unchanged over time. Studying two leaders from each period offers adequate evidence for how the particular period and war influenced how these men fought and also provides a basis for comparative analysis of fighting styles.

This study seeks to discover what insights contemporary military practitioners may gain from studying the command attributes of America's insurgent leaders. Various leadership styles have made commanders successful throughout history. This study will pursue answers to several questions to develop an understanding of what made the four men effective insurgent leaders. It will seek to discover the elements of continuity and discontinuity in insurgency and how this form of warfare contributes to larger campaigns. The study will then focus on understanding the four men as leaders. It will analyze the similar command attributes these men shared and those areas that differed.

The essence of war has remained relatively constant over time. It is a violent struggle between two sides to achieve political objectives. What changes is the character of particular wars and the manners in which they are fought.[2] Conventional warfare has evolved significantly over time. This is also true of insurgent warfare. Although some of the methods have changed, the essence of insurgency has not. Insurgents wage a style of war that is distinctive from that of their conventional counterparts. They possess particular traits enabling them to prosecute this form of warfare and require leaders who also possess distinct characteristics.

Although insurgency is as old as war itself, the post-World War II period has been characterized by significant growth in this type of fighting. Insurgencies became very frequent during the Cold War as European colonies sought independence from their masters and revolutionary leaders spread communist and nationalist ideals to underdeveloped areas of the world. This trend continues today, as non-state entities seek to expand their influence through violent means. These non-state actors do not possess the power necessary to fight symmetrically against large governmental powers, inducing them to employ unconventional strategies. As this trend continues, it will be critical for nations to understand the potential of these threats and develop effective strategies to counter them. Comprehending insurgent leadership styles is an important component of this overall understanding.

[2] Colin S. Gray. "How has War Changed Since the End of the Cold War?" *Parameters*, Spring 2005, 17.

Irregular warfare is associated with several non-traditional activities, and the terms describing these activities are often incorrectly transposed with one another. In order to prevent confusion, several key terms will be defined here using the current Joint Publication (JP) 1-02.

JP 1-02 defines irregular warfare as: "A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will."[3] JP 1-02 defines unconventional warfare as: "Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area."[4] Thus, unconventional warfare is the overarching framework that employs both insurgent and guerrilla operations. Insurgency is defined as "The organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself."[5] Insurgencies may be largely indigenous and/or actively abetted and supported by external actors. They may serve a complementary role to conventional forces or they may be independent activities. In this thesis, the American Revolutionary War was a rebellion that contained components of an insurgency, which were particularly pronounced in Nathanael Greene's campaign in the Carolinas. The American Civil War was also a rebellion but, like the Revolutionary War, it contained insurgent aspects within it. Guerrilla warfare is defined as: "Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces."[6] Guerrilla warfare may thus be used as an aid to conventional operations, a counter against conventional operations, or a military tool of an insurgency. Differentiating among the above terms will assist in understanding the type of campaign fought by each leader in the study.

Evidence for this thesis comes from both primary and secondary sources. Because of the limited nature of battle reports in guerrilla fighting, the research will primarily focus on memoirs, letters, and biographical sketches. Battlefield correspondence of the higher-echelon conventional

[3] Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010, 177.
[4] JP 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 355.
[5] JP 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 167.
[6] JP 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 147.

forces these insurgent leaders fought with and against will be used to provide context for the campaigns. This information will be augmented by historical studies and articles concerning the insurgent leaders as well as the current concepts of professional military leadership and counterinsurgency warfare.

The secondary-source material will be used primarily to provide context for the insurgencies, the leadership, and other supplemental information about each campaign. Historical texts are used to provide context for the wars covered and how the nature of war itself varied during the campaigns of the four insurgent leaders. Current doctrine and writings on command and leader development will assist in developing an understanding of each man's leadership style. Contemporary works on general warfare and insurgent warfare will also help shape the analysis of the differing leadership styles required for each type of war.

Several key references will be used in this study. The Revolutionary War chapter will depend on historical biographies, such as William G. Simms's *The Life of Francis Marion* and Cecil B. Hartley's *The Life of Major General Henry Lee… and the Life of General Thomas Sumter*, together with correspondence between Major General Nathanael Greene and his guerrilla leaders Marion and Sumter. Some important works that will be used for the Civil War chapter include *Mosby's War Reminiscences: Stuart's Cavalry Campaigns*, James J. Williamson's *Mosby's Rangers*, and J. Harvey Mathes's *General Forrest*.

A major focus of the study is to determine what made these four insurgent leaders successful or unsuccessful. It will first examine how each man's thinking influenced the way he fought. It will then look for similarities and differences in the fighting styles among the four subjects. The final step compares and contrasts the command attributes of the four men in relation to the wars they fought and suggests ways contemporary leaders can mold themselves for the uncertainties of ongoing and future insurgencies.

The study uses two criteria to arrive at its conclusions and implications. The first is how effectively each insurgent campaign contributed to the outcome of the war in which it was conducted. The second is how effectively each leader utilized his forces against conventional forces. Here it asks, in effect, what types of tactics were used, and how appropriate were they? Each historical example will also examine whether the insurgent forces were used in conjunction with conventional forces and, if so, to what effect?

The historical studies will follow a chronological sequence of the wars in which each duo of insurgent leaders led. The thesis will then analyze the evidence and provide conclusions about insurgent leadership traits. Finally, it will draw implications for the modern military practitioner on the leadership traits required to counter insurgent forces.

The American Revolutionary War study will assess Francis Marion's 1781 to 1782 guerrilla campaign in South Carolina and Thomas Sumter's 1776 to 1782 insurgency in the Carolinas. This chapter will study the individual campaigns of both men, their forces, and their overall roles in General Greene's southern campaign of the Revolutionary War. It will address qualities that were particular to each man, how warfare was conducted during the late eighteenth century, and the effect insurgent warfare had on the outcome of the American Revolution.

The American Civil War study examines Nathan Bedford Forrest's 1861 to 1865 insurgency in the western theater and John Mosby's 1863-1865 campaign in Virginia. It analyzes the individual campaigns of both men, their forces, and how their campaigns contributed to the theater of operation in which they fought. It will address qualities that were particular to each man, how warfare was conducted during the mid-nineteenth century, and the impact insurgent warfare had as a component of a civil war.

The study concludes by analyzing and synthesizing the information presented in the historical examples. It evaluates the evidence presented and answers the research question. It will also state the implications of the findings and determine their value for contemporary leaders. It begins by examining how the lives of the four leaders influenced their command attributes. It then analyzes how effective their fighting styles were in relation to the regions where they fought, the enemies they encountered, and the wars and time periods in which they were involved. Finally it examines how effectively each leader performed and their understanding of the context of the war in which they fought. This analysis is then used to compare and contrast the command attributes of the four men and identify implications for modern warriors. The study will also indicate how examining the leadership traits of America's insurgents can aid the contemporary military practitioner.

The analysis is partially limited by the unevenness of information about the four protagonists. The nature of insurgent warfare does not lend itself to comprehensive battlefield reports, as typically produced by conventional forces. Much of what is known from the earlier

cases comes from personal correspondence, eyewitness accounts, and memoirs. This information may not always accurately reflect the actual events as they took place. The amount of information about each man also varies and may limit some comparative aspects of the collective group. Nevertheless, the primary and secondary sources are adequate to the task at hand.

Having reviewed the purpose, outline, and method of the work, we may now proceed with examining the insurgent leadership of Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter during the American Revolutionary War.

Chapter 2

The American Revolutionary War: The Southern Insurgents

We fight, get beat, rise, and fight again.

-General Nathanael Greene

This chapter examines the leadership roles of Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter during the American Revolution. It begins with a contextual overview of that war focused on its irregular aspects. It then assesses General Nathanael Greene's southern campaign to demonstrate how the two insurgent leaders' efforts were integrated into Greene's overall strategy. It then examines the lives and military campaigns of Marion and Sumter. It concludes by analyzing insurgency's role in the American Revolution and the leadership traits that contributed to or detracted from each man's success.

The American Revolution

Much of the history Americans know of the American Revolutionary War is limited to positivist accounts. As David Palmer wrote: "All in all, it is not too sweeping an indictment to say that, over the years, historians have handled few, if any, major events in our history quite as ineptly as they have the Revolutionary War."[7] Beyond the patriotic grandeur portrayed in popular history, the American Revolution was in reality a period of extreme political, economic, and social distress. Differences between the colonies over slavery were clearly evident, the lack of a federal treasury left an army without pay for much of the war, and divided loyalties pitted neighbor against neighbor. The colonists had to contend not only with an external foe, but also with significant internal tensions. In order to gain a useful understanding of the war's military operations, both the external and internal challenges must be grasped.[8]

From the beginning of their existence, Britain's North American colonies maintained loose ties to England. Many scholars have noted that the colonists were the freest people in the world.[9] Tensions did not begin to rise until Britain looked to the colonies to help refill its coffers

[7] David Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), xv.
[8] John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), 121.
[9] Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, xiii.

following the costly war with France and offset maintenance of a British military presence in North America. On one hand, British policymakers believed the presence of a standing army in North America would lessen colonial fears of the Native Americans and assure safety from French and Spanish attack. They also believed the colonies would not object too severely to being taxed to defray the cost of this force.[10] On the other hand, the colonists believed they should have a say in these matters and saw a growing pattern of control by England that infringed upon their freedoms.[11] Although this perceived injustice was not initially sufficient for the colonists to seek independence, it set in motion a growing fear of domination that slowly but inexorably pushed them toward revolution.

The firepower and maneuver now the hallmarks of America's modern military forces had not yet taken shape in the agrarian society of colonial North America. The farmers and frontiersman of the New World were largely independent, and their fighting style reflected this trait. Early Americans had not yet formed the modern desire for quick victory and the belief that overwhelming force would dominate the battlefield. The modern military juggernaut that made the United States a global hegemon traces its lineage to the fighting men of the American Revolution, but one would be hard-pressed to note many similarities.

The first challenge faced by the Continental Congress was creating the force necessary to contend with the dominant British army. Establishing a colonial army to defend against the British regulars proved challenging. The Continental army began as a small force of poorly trained and equipped farmers and frontiersmen. John Shy noted that, "It was never a very good army by European standards, it never won a battle in open field, and it was never very large because most Americans simply would not join that kind of un-American institution."[12] Martial methods of the day required towns to muster their own defense forces to protect their interests. This created problems in establishing a colonial army, as the size and capability of these forces varied from town to town. Recognizing this tension, George Washington pushed for the creation of a Continental army. He eventually and was selected to command the army.

Because the regular army remained small throughout the war, the militias were a critical component of the American forces. In fact, the Continental army never replaced the militias and

[10] John Richard Alden, *The South in the Revolution: 1763-1789*, (Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 55.
[11] Alden, *The South in the Revolution,* 63.
[12] Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed,* 121.

"at practically every critical junction these disparate forces acted in concert."[13] The symbiosis of continental regulars, militias, and guerrilla bands allowed the Americans to gain the strength necessary to outlast the British and eventually win their independence.

Like many wars pitting weak forces against strong, the Patriot cause required external support. While the War for Independence began as a struggle between the North American colonists and England, it eventually became a global war. Both sides depended on foreign assistance in the fighting. Over the course of the war, more than half the total British forces in North America were comprised of Hessian and other German mercenaries.[14] Likewise, the colonies could not have prevailed without the French.

For the Americans, allied support was a critical to defeating the British. General Burgoyne's surrender of Saratoga in October 1777 helped secure French support. Although the French had surreptitiously supported the Americans from the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, General Gates' defeat of Burgoyne provided France the impetus to commit troops to the conflict. The addition of Rochambeau's army gave a much needed boost to the war effort. The French Navy played a significant role in the British defeat at Yorktown, but its interest in the West Indies kept it away from the North American coast for much of the war.

The colonial victory at Saratoga also expanded the war in other ways that significantly degraded the British effort. The fact that the strongest military force of the day could be defeated by a colonial rabble opened the eyes of Britain's other enemies. Spain and Holland took advantage of Britain's weakened state by attacking other colonial outposts. Eventually the war spread to India, Africa, Gibraltar, and the West Indies, tying up numerous British troops and much of the Royal Navy. It is therefore important to note that without these outside events, "the Revolution could not possibly have ended *when* it did and in the *way* that it did."[15]

Insurgency in the American Revolution

America's insurgent beginnings are tied to its vast wilderness and relatively small population. The hit-and-run tactics of the Native American tribes effectively used the terrain and

[13] Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1994), 57.
[14] Anthony James Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 13.
[15] Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*,131.

made economical use of the available forces. These tactics did not go unrecognized by the colonists, and they designed their early defense forces to practice them. Ranger units were established throughout the colonies during the years preceding the Revolution to protect the colonists from attacks by their Native American and French neighbors. The most notable of these groups was Robert Rogers's Rangers, which became famous during the French and Indian Wars. John Tierney credits Rogers as being America's first guerrilla leader. Rogers's hit-and-run raids and ambushes were crucial to Britain's eventual victory over the French in North America.[16] Within a decade, American insurgent forces would again use these tactics to drive Britain itself from the thirteen American colonies.

In many ways, the concepts of the American Revolution predated Mao's *On Protracted War* by a century-and-a-half.[17] The vanguards of the movement were the outspoken politicians, landowners, and educated professionals in the Continental Congress. The rhetoric of their calls for rebellion against the King solidified a common colonial cause. Their ability to bring together disparate elements and to spread patriotic ideology throughout the colonies was critical to the eventual victory. The small, diverse population and the vastness of the colonial territories were significant barriers to unification against a common enemy, and "many on both sides of the Atlantic considered the colonists too diverse in interest and viewpoint to effectively think and act in unison."[18] By July 1776, an almost unanimous majority of colonial leaders recognized that conditions were ripe for claiming independence from England. The political vanguard of the rebellion understood that the mounting popular antipathy for the crown, coupled with the skepticism that the colonists would actually revolt, made it opportune to declare independence. Congress also recognized the importance of international support. Men such as Benjamin Franklin garnered the necessary support from England's biggest enemies in France and Spain.

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[16] John J. Tierney, Jr., Chasing Ghosts: Unconventional Warfare in American History, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2006), 23.

[17] Mao later argued that quick victory could not be achieved by a weak Chinese force against the militarily strong Japanese. This protracted war concept calls for the revolutionary force to survive in the strategic defensive during the initial stage, while the enemy goes on the strategic offensive. Avoiding direct confrontation allowed the defenders to build strength while limiting losses. By protracting the war revolutionary forces not only gain the time necessary to strengthen, but as with both the British and Japanese aggressors, the aggressor force slowly loses irreplaceable strength and the popular will in the home country turns against the fight. External support and international recognition are also critical to creating the legitimacy of the cause, and both revolutions gained that external recognition and support. The protracted strategy employed in the American and Chinese Communist revolutions provide striking similarities, most notably that the strategy was successful in both cases.

[18] Alden, *The South in the Revolution*, 207.

The financial, military, and political support of these allies became major factors in the successful outcome of the war.

While the American struggle against England constituted an external revolution, the internal strife was much bloodier. The American Revolution was very much a civil war. Loyalist Tory forces battled their Patriot neighbors in bloody fighting. As John Shy noted, "In proportion to population, almost as many Americans were engaged in fighting other Americans during the Revolution as did so during the Civil War."[19]

The social diversity of the American Revolution was a result of the vast geography and varying backgrounds of the colonists. Those colonists most recently arrived from Europe and those merchants whose livelihood depended on trade with England tended to remain loyal to the crown.[20] The colonists whose roots were more deeply planted tended to lose the familial ties to Europe. Colonials whose ancestors were persecuted in Europe, such as the French Protestants, and the merchants and farmers who were less dependent on trade with England tended to favor independence. H.N. Moore clarifies the spirit of the established southern colonists in his statement: "Everything in South Carolina contributed to nourish a spirit of liberty and independence. Every inhabitant was, or easily might be a freeholder. Settled on lands of his own, he was both farmer and landlord. Having no superiors to whom he was obliged to look up, and producing all the necessaries of life from his own grounds, he soon became independent."[21] The newly arrived colonists who had not adopted the values of their new communities tended to be at odds with their neighbors, and violent fighting often took place within local communities. The war was not simply a rebellion against English tyranny, but also a war among neighbors.

The tactic of terror was used by both sides throughout the war. The violence brought by both the loyalists and rebels on the citizens of their home regions adversely influenced the campaigns of both sides. Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's policy of burning the homes and farms of known patriots only distanced the populace from the British occupiers. Patriot supporters used similar tactics against their loyalist neighbors in an effort to coerce submission or as retribution for personal grievances. These efforts rarely achieved useful results and more

[19] Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed,* 183.
[20] John Tierney noted that Tories remained loyal for a number of reasons, including birthplace (those born in Great Britain tended towards loyalism), occupation and position in society, the possibility of social or financial gain, nationality, or religion. John J. Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2006), 31.
[21] H.N. Moore, *The Life and Times of Francis Marion,* (Philadelphia, PA: John B. Perry Publisher, 1845), 13.

often only reinforced the victim's resolve. Time has shown that targeted acts of violence against non-combatants are at best ineffective and at worst counterproductive.[22] Thomas Sumter's emergence as an insurgent leader reflects the unintended consequences of these tactics.

Historical treatment of the military component of the American Revolution focuses primarily on the mid-Atlantic and New England battles of the war. Bunker (Breed's) Hill, Trenton, Princeton, and the British surrenders at Saratoga and Yorktown comprise the extent of most American's military knowledge of the war. Few understand the significance of the southern campaign. The next section establishes the context of the southern campaign, in which Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter played significant roles.

The War in the South

The appointment of General Nathanael Greene to command the southern campaign in December 1780 proved to be a major turning point in the war. Greene followed a succession of commanders who, while avoiding destruction by the British, were never able to slow the British advance. Greene based his strategy on Charles Lee's theory of popular war. To Lee and his supporters, the only way to achieve victory against the British regulars was to fight them using indigenous methods.[23] While the independent men of North America could not engage the British forces in direct, European-style battles, they could effectively employ light infantry and hit-and-run tactics against the stronger British. While Greene should rightfully be remembered for his protracted war strategy, it is important to note that he never fought a major battle in which he is credited with victory. Although the patriot victories at King's Mountain and Cowpens fell within his area of responsibility, the first was fought by a guerrilla band of frontiersman enraged by British threats against their homes; and the second was a brilliant tactical success by a force Greene had detached from his main army. Anthony James Joes pointed out; it was not Greene's victories but his ability to wear down the British that proved decisive. "General Greene could suffer one tactical defeat after another, and the war would go on; but let Cornwallis be defeated only once, and British hopes to suppress the Revolution would be as good as finished. Greene is

[22] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 151.
[23] John Shy described Charles Lee's theory of the revolution: "It was a fight by free men for their natural rights. Neither the fighters nor the goals were suited to the techniques of despotism—the linear tactics, the rigid discipline, the long enlistments, the strict separation of the army from civic life that marked Frederick's Prussia. Lee envisioned a popular war of mass resistance, a war based on military service as an obligation of citizenship." Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 161.

a classic example of a general who loses the battles and wins the war."[24]

Though not a military man by profession, Greene had a passion for martial matters. "He had read everything pertaining to the military art in English or in translation that he could get his hands on, right back to and including the classics."[25] A Rhode Island blacksmith, he did not look the part of a great warrior. Intellect, resourcefulness, and flexibility were his greatest attributes. He quickly rose to the rank of major general and proved his abilities while serving as Washington's Quartermaster General. His performance gained him Washington's praise and recommendation to command the southern army.

Greene recognized that he would never possess the strength necessary to defeat the British with his regular army alone. He worked with colonial governors for militia support and in concert with guerrilla forces in the area to tie down large portions of the British army. Greene also created a logistical system that utilized the river network and worked diligently to gain local support for his forces. Each of these factors was essential to his eventual victory.

The nature of the conflict between the patriots and England required developing a symbiosis between the outnumbered Continental army, state militia troops, and partisan guerrillas. Continental regulars provided the skill and experience needed to engage their British foes, while the militia forces added their manpower to bolster the size of the Continental forces. The relatively green militia troops had to be handled with care because they tended to break and run in the face of advancing British forces. This often led to the patriot forces being pushed from the field. The limited number of regular troops in the south resulted in continuous defeats for Greene, but the patriot victory at Cowpens showed how these forces could work in concert to defeat the British.

Daniel Morgan used the weaknesses of the militias to his advantage at a field in western Carolina known as Cowpens. Knowing that the British would recognize the cobbled-together militia units in his ranks and expect familiar outcomes, he employed them as a ruse in his defensive scheme. Forming the militia in successive lines roughly 150 yards apart, he instructed the first line to get two shots off at the British forces before retreating. They would then reform

[24] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 31.
[25] Donald B. Chidsey, *The War in the South: The Carolinas and Georgia in the American Revolution*, (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1969), 118.

behind the second line of militia troops, which would also fire off two shots before withdrawing.[26]

The sight of militia troops running away inspired the British troops to pursue with fixed bayonets to force a rout. They failed to see that a slight rise on the field hid Morgan's main force of regular troops. Thus, as the retreating militia formed on the flank of these troops, the British forces were caught in disarray and rapidly driven from the field. Such tactical originality is a hallmark of leading a mixed force of regulars and irregulars.

Insurgent forces were also critical to Greene's success in the South. They raided and ambushed British and Tory camps, and their mobility allowed them to disrupt the flanks and rear of the British forces. Such attacks did not destroy the enemy force, but over time they weakened it significantly. Because the insurgents could disappear into the swamps and hills following an attack, the British and Tories made violent reprisals against local civilians, which inflamed local resistance. Thus, the insurgents came to depend on the British counterattacks as a vehicle for mobilizing the population in support of the patriot cause.[27]

Although Greene's campaign of exhaustion failed to defeat the British, it eventually forced Cornwallis to move north from the Carolinas to his defeat at Yorktown. Richard Alden neatly summed up the symbiosis that produced the victory: "It is clear that the patriots of the lower South, although they might have been able to continue guerrilla fighting indefinitely, could hardly have dealt effectively with the British and their Tory allies without the assistance of the regulars from the upper South and Delaware. On the other hand, Greene could hardly have kept the field without the aid of Marion, Sumter, [Andrew] Pickens, [Elijah] Clarke, [Isaac] Huger, and the partisans."[28] General Greene's ability to orchestrate the efforts of all resources at his disposal was perhaps the most significant ingredient of victory in the south.

The success gained with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 is a testament to the determination and independent spirit of these early Americans. It must be noted, however, that in order to win, their most important requirement was not to lose. They maintained sufficient strength to hold off the British long enough to discourage continued support for the war from

[26] Chidsey, *The War in the South*, 130.
[27] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1977), 180.
[28] Alden, *The South in the Revolution*, 63.

England.[29] Having reviewed the general context of the war in the south, we now examine the two major contributors to America's first insurgency—Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter.

Francis Marion: The Swamp Fox

Francis Marion was born in St. John's Parish, South Carolina, in 1732. His parents, Gabriel and Esther Marion, were first-generation Carolinians born to French Huguenot immigrants.[30] The Marions settled at Goatfield Plantation in St. John's Parish, a region bordering the Santee River. Within a generation the family had become prosperous rice and indigo planters and owned several plantations along the Santee.

The youngest of six children, Francis was a puny child — not what one would consider the makings of a future war hero.[31] Deeply religious and gentle, he loved nature and the outdoors, presumably because of his life as a frontier farmer. "His hardihood, elasticity, great courage and admirable dexterity in war, were also the natural results of their frontier position."[32] This frontier life and his intimate knowledge of the Carolina low country would greatly enhance his later role as an insurgent fighter.

Much is written about his compassion, but he also possessed a no-nonsense fighting spirit. These divergent characteristics influenced his insurgent leadership attributes. Robert Bass provided the following description of Marion's disciplined nature and warrior spirit:

> In all of this fantasy Americans forgot the real Francis Marion. He was neither a Robin Hood nor a Chevalier Bayard. He was a moody, introverted, semiliterate genius who rose from private to Brigadier General through an intuitive grasp of strategy and tactics, personal bravery, devotion to duty, and worship of liberty.
>
> Yet his orders, orderly books, battle reports, and personal letters reveal another side to his character. He shot pickets, retaliated from ambush, failed to honor flags of truce, and knowingly violated international law. He could forgive the Tories, and yet he could court-martial his closest friend. Such paradoxical qualities inspired admiration in his officers and love in his men.[33]

W. Gilmore Simms offered a complementary view of Marion: "Uncompromising in the cause of truth, stern in the prosecution of his duties, hardy and fearless as the soldier, he was yet, in peace,

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[29] Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 21.
[30] Robert D. Bass, *Swamp Fox: The Life and Campaigns of General Francis Marion*, (Henry Holt & Company, 1958), 5.
[31] P. Horry and M.L. Weems, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1884), 20.
[32] W. Gilmore Simms, *The Life of Francis Marion*, (New York: H.G. Langley, 1846), 24.
[33] Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 4.

equally gentle and compassionate, pleased to be merciful, glad and ready to forgive, sweetly patient of mood, and distinguished throughout by such prominent virtues, that, while always sure of the affections of followers and comrades, he was not less secure in the unforced confidence of his enemies, among whom his integrity and mercy were proverbial."[34] The enigmas represented in these pen portraits evince the complexities of Marion's personality.

When he was six years old, his family moved to a plantation in Prince George Parish, presumably to allow the children to attend the English school in Georgetown, which Francis attended until the age of fifteen.[35] He then left to fulfill his dream of adventure at sea, joining the crew of a schooner bound for the West Indies. On the return trip the schooner sank, and the crew spent seven days adrift before reaching land. This ended his desire for adventure on the seas.[36]

Little is known about his life between his 1748 near-death experience at sea and 1751. It is generally agreed that he returned to his family plantation. He remained with his mother following his father's death in 1757 and became the primary caretaker of his parent's plantation.

The Militia Years

Marion's military career began in the closing years of the French and Indian War. In 1756 he and his brother Gabriel enlisted in the Provincial Militia under Captain John Postell. They attended musters and drills together, but there was no call to arms until 1759 when the Cherokee War began. Gabriel received a commission and organized his own company. Francis served in his brother's company, but they did no fighting. In 1761 the Cherokee tribes of the area began harassing the southern settlements. A force was established to repel these attacks. Although family commitments took his brother away from the militia, Francis was commissioned a first lieutenant in Captain William Moutrie's company of infantry.[37] This gave Marion the opportunity to display his military prowess and daring.

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[34] Simms, *The Life of Francis Marion*, 20.
[35] Marion's age at the time his education ended and he set out as a sailor varies. Robert Bass notes Marion to have been "about 15". Frost and Weems noted that Marion was 12 years of age when he departed home for the sea, and Moore and Hartley identified his age as 16. The reasons for the variance between the biographers is unknown, but may be attributed to a lack of documentation from Marion's early life. All Marion's known biographies were begun after his death in 1795, therefore authors were forced to rely on written records and accounts of the time.
[36] Horry and Weems, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, 21.
[37] Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 8.

The militia commander, Colonel Thomas Middleton, was ordered to move his regiment against several Indian villages along the Santee in retribution for earlier attacks on English settlements. The Native American warriors mounted a strong defense near the village of Etchoee, and Lieutenant Marion was selected to lead an advance force of thirty men against the defenders. Although Marion quickly lost twenty-one men in the fighting, he pushed forward until the main force overcame the defense and destroyed the enemy villages.[38] Marion had proven his mettle in combat, but his compassionate nature found the subsequent destruction of the Indian villages distasteful.[39] Both these experiences would influence his future leadership style and conduct of warfare.

When the Cherokee rebellion had been put down, Marion returned to planting. After ten years of successful production on leased land, he was able to purchase his own plantation.[40] His agricultural success, coupled with his courageous leadership against the Cherokees, earned him respect within the community. As tension with England grew during the early 1770s, he gained a nomination to represent St. John's Parish at the first meeting of the Provincial Congress in January 1775.

The lack of a consequential decision at the first meeting of the Congress required a second meeting in June 1775. This time the Congress adopted the American Bill of Rights and Act of Association. At the request of the Continental Congress, it also raised two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry. Marion was elected a captain in the Second Regiment of Infantry.[41]

Marion readily accepted his appointment and quickly began recruiting men for his company. In January 1776 his company worked to fortify Fort Johnson, in anticipation of a British attack on Charleston. The artfulness of Marion's leadership soon came to the fore. One of his Lieutenants, a man of dubious integrity, desired to attend a cock-fighting event and concocted the story that his father was ill and dying. Marion granted him a furlough to attend to his father. Recognizing later that he had been told an untruth, Marion did not let on when the

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[38] Cecil B. Hartley, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, (Philadelphia, PA: Davis, Porter, and Coates, 1866), 56-57.
[39] John Frost included an extract of a letter Marion wrote about his feelings towards the wonton destruction: "The next morning we proceeded, by order of Colonel Grant, to burn the Indian cabins. Some of our men seemed to enjoy this cruel work, laughing very heartily at the curling flames, as they mounted, loud-crackling, over the tops of the huts. But to me it appeared a shocking sight. 'Poor creatures!' thought I, 'we surely need not grudge you such miserable habitations!' But when we came, according to orders, to cut down whole fields of corn, I could scarcely refrain from tears." John Frost, *Pictorial Life of Francis Marion*, (Philadelphia, PA: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1847), 21.
[40] Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 10.
[41] Horry and Weems, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, 27.

lieutenant returned two weeks later. He merely replied curtly, "Aye, lieutenant, is that you? Well, never mind it—there is no harm done—I never missed you."[42] His disdain for the undisciplined act evident in the public humiliation of the lieutenant was probably more effective than formal punishment.

Marion was promoted to major in February 1776. The initial attack of Charleston by the British put him in his first fight of the war. During the attack he led the left wing of Colonel William Moultrie's defense, often leveling the heavy guns himself.[43] His staunch leadership during the attack produced promotion to lieutenant colonel and second-in-command of the regiment. Marion's rise through the ranks of the Second Regiment culminated with promotion to regimental commander in 1778. Over the next year Marion proved a capable leader of the Charleston defenses. He created a well-ordered force, endearing him to his men. As Major Peter Horry reported, "I am not afraid to say that Marion was the architect of the Second Regiment and laid the foundation of that excellent discipline and confidence in themselves."[44] Marion's leadership during the tense period before the next, successful British assault on Charleston was reflected in his later insurgent command.

Marion was not present when the British attacked Charleston in March 1780. His aversion to the merriment of social events led him to leave an obligatory party from a second-story window and break his ankle. While he was recovering from the fall, the British attacked. General Benjamin Lincoln, in command of the American forces, ordered Marion evacuated to his home in St. John's Parish. This proved serendipitous, as Lincoln's force surrendered to the British soon thereafter. Although Marion remained a member of the Continental army, he spent the next two years leading a mixture of regular troops, militiamen, and partisans against the British forces in the Carolinas, thus creating his legacy as an insurgent leader.

The Swamp Fox

Marion reemerged on the battlefield in 1780 as General Horatio Gates prepared for his ill-fated attack on Camden. While few militias at the time were willing to face the British directly, Marion assembled about twenty men and answered Gates's call to muster at Hillsborough. General Johann De Kalb noted the pitiful appearance of Marion and his men:

[42] Horry and Weems, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, 33.
[43] Horry and Weems, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, 41.
[44] Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 22.

"some white, some black, and all mounted but most of them miserably equipped."[45] Marion's motley band would soon prove the militia's worth in Gates's abortive attack on Camden.

As Gates prepared to attack, Marion consulted with De Kalb and agreed that his forces would move around the town and burn bridges and ferries crossing the Santee. Marion accomplished his mission, but Gates's force was slaughtered at Camden. Gates's reckless attack gave the British a major victory, but it also proved the utility of the militia forces in conducting supporting operations for the main force. Greene's arrival as commander of the southern army in December 1780 led to effective incorporation of the militia forces into the overall strategy. Marion's force became instrumental to the success of Greene's campaign.

Following the battle of Camden, Governor John Rutledge promoted Marion to brigadier general. Marion quickly established a new militia brigade among the low-country swamps east of the Santee. These men endured significant hardships. Marion could do little to provide the resources to sustain his force, but he shared in their suffering. They subsisted on little food and no pay, while suffering miserable living conditions. As one British officer noted to his superior following a meeting with Marion on Snow's Island: "Why, sir, I have seen an American general and his officers, without pay, and almost without clothes, living on roots and drinking water; and all for *Liberty*! What chance have we against such men!"[46] Marion ate, slept, and fought through the same hardship as his men throughout the war. Such selflessness was uncommon for leaders of the day and probably garnered Marion much respect from his men.

As the war progressed, Marion began a campaign of harassment against the British. Attacking enemy camps, raiding supply depots, and providing intelligence for Greene's army, Marion created chaos for the enemy forces. Not only were the British losing men to continuous harassment, but they were also forced to commit more forces to defending against Marion's attacks. Battles at Sumter's House, the Great Savannah, and Black Mingo Swamp were significant victories for the small militia bands; and word of these actions soon incited fear in the British and loyalist troops.

Cornwallis committed significant forces to defeat Marion, including Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's Green Dragoons. Cornwallis's directive to Tarleton succinctly described the effect Marion's campaign was having on British forces: "He cut off supplies from the army,

[45] Lance Q. Zedric and Michael R. Dilley, *Elite Warriors: 300 Years of America's Best Fighting Troops*, (Ventura, CA: Pathfinder Publishing, 1996), 60.
[46] Horry and Weems, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, 156.

broke up the Tories, destroyed recruiting parties, intercepted and interrupted communications, and, darting to and from between British posts, which he had not the power to overcome, showed that nothing but that power was necessary to enable him to challenge with them the possession of the soil. That he should disband his men at one moment, and be able by a word to bring them together when they were again wanted, proves a singular alliance between the chieftain and his followers, which is characteristic of the most romantic history."[47] Tarleton spent several fruitless months in pursuit of Marion. His frustration is evident in his declaration that, "As for this damned old fox, the Devil himself could not catch him."[48] Marion would henceforth be known as The Swamp Fox.

Whether out of respect for their non-combatant status or his religious convictions, Marion did not support the acts of violence being perpetuated by both sides. He was as quick to condemn his own troops who attacked civilians as he was the British.[49] Marion considered such acts abominable. He also grasped that such actions by his forces against the loyalists had great potential to harm the patriot effort because they invariably led to retaliation.

Marion's compassion was unaltered by the violence, as evident in his treatment of the enemy prisoners. "Even though flushed with victory, when Marion turned to the Loyalists his heart filled with compassion. He knew each of them: the dead, the wounded, and the prisoners; he also knew their fathers and brothers. He began talking to the captives. So earnest, magnanimous, and convincing was he that five of them renounced the King, swore allegiance to the United States, and joined his band."[50] This fair treatment of enemy sympathizers doubtlessly gave him the advantage over the British in gaining popular support.

Marion also garnered civilian support by providing non-combatants with necessities as they became available. In one instance where the British had accumulated a large quantity of salt near Georgetown, Marion sent a raiding party to secure it. As Major William James noted, "As soon as Gen. Marion could collect sufficient quantity of this desirable article at Snow's Island, he distributed it out in quantities, not exceeding a bushel for each Whig family; and thus

[47] Simms, *The Life of Francis Marion*, 129.
[48] Chidsey, *The War in the South*, 87.
[49] A member of Marion's command, Captain Murphy tortured a Loyalist named Blackman for remaining loyal to the King. Murphy would eventually release Blackman, but when his uncle condemned him for his actions, Murphy shot his uncle. Marion despised Murphy's actions and reported these regrets to General Greene in his report of 4 October, 1780. Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 68.
[50] Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 67.

endeared himself the more to his followers."[51] From these acts Marion developed the Robin Hood persona Bass noted earlier.

Although never formally schooled in military strategy or leadership, Marion displayed the attributes that every soldier desires in a leader. "He was one of those men who are born to command. His active and brilliant career as leader of the famous 'Marion's Brigade,' has scarcely a parallel in history; and his success in defending the Carolinas against the enemy, at a time when he was almost alone in the field, is due in a great measure to his power of attracting the personal regard of his men, and keeping them in active service, while surrounded by every species of discouragement, and the incessant danger of their utter destruction by the overwhelming force of the enemy."[52] His determination, compassion, and energy undoubtedly inspired his men into action against overwhelming odds.

Marion was also innovative. His constantly-evolving techniques ensured the enemy was always off balance. His ability to adapt his tactics to the enemy forces also enabled him to evade their reach until he felt the time was right to engage. To enhance the prospect of surprise during an approach march, he would have his men lay blankets over bridges to muffle the sounds of the horses' hooves. To ensure the enemy was unable to surprise him, he would place pickets high in the trees and instruct them to signal with a shrill bird-like whistle when the adversary came near.[53] Unlike conventional pickets who would generally engage the enemy, this tactic allowed his men to leave an area ahead of the enemy advance.

The traits that made Marion so successful also proved to be his Achilles heel. Marion's compassion created a policy that allowed his men to come and go as they pleased. While this may have improved morale, he was often left with a limited force. Beyond a dedicated core of fighters, Marion could seldom depend on a force of any strength. This inconsistency hindered his ability to operate effectively, though it rarely kept him from dispatching what forces he did have against the enemy.

Marion's sense of righteousness at times clouded his judgment. When Captain Postell was imprisoned by the British while under a flag of truce, Marion became enraged and issued the questionable order to shoot pickets and inflict measures on the British commensurate with those inflicted on his men. His capture of a British officer under flag of truce as retribution for CPT

[51] Bass, *Swamp Fox,*125.
[52] Hartley, *The Life of General Francis Marion*, 3.
[53] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 42.

Postell's capture was also not in keeping with his reputable nature. These acts created division within his force and undermined its discipline.

Despite these shortcomings Marion was generally disciplined and flexible in his command. He led from the front in daring, yet carefully assessed, raids. He was a master of stealth and frequently approached an encamped enemy by simultaneously attacking from three sides.[54] His knowledge of the terrain allowed him to surprise his enemy in blitz-like raids and quickly disappear back into the Carolina swamps.

Marion's success was also attributable to his decisiveness. His ability to assess situations and make decisions rapidly allowed his forces to surprise and overwhelm the enemy on multiple occasions. If Marion stumbled upon an enemy force, he would coolly devise an effective plan. While his attacks on the enemy proved devastating, his decisiveness did not lead to rash judgments. He also possessed a significant amount of prudence. While quick to develop a plan of attack, he was refrained from impulsive action in unfavorable situations. As Anthony Joes noted, "Marion was a cautious commander, very careful with the lives of his followers, 'that kind of leader who attracts men, not by a convivial personality or generous nature, but because he wins, and his victories do not cost needless lives.'"[55]

Although Marion and his men depended on the population for security and support, he also understood the need for sanctuary. He developed a base of operations deep in the swamps at a place known as Snow's Island. From there he dispatched his patrols and maintained a base for his men to convalesce and store their limited supplies. In a rare lapse of Marion's security, Colonel Ellis Doyle's Loyalists, led by local guides, were able to locate and overrun Marion's men on the island. This brought much despair to his men, but Marion was able to rally them to return to active operations.

Summary

Marion fully understood his role in supporting General Greene's forces, tying up loyalist forces and freeing up Greene's army for the major battles. He also knew the importance his force played in providing intelligence to the Continental army. His comprehensive reports to Greene were valuable in ensuring Greene's limited force remained one step ahead of the British.

[54] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 37.
[55] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 37.

Marion also understood that maintaining popular support was critical. As a Carolina native, Marion knew the people and their needs. This facilitated the support his forces needed to operate freely in the region. His personal convictions were strongly against the practice of burning the homes and farms of civilians, and he understood that such action only strengthened their resolve against the patriot cause. Marion was masterful in applying this understanding of the people to his activities, thus uniting Carolinians against the British occupation. This kept Greene from having to worry about the security of his lines of communication.

Marion's understanding of the strategic context of and his role in Greene's campaign was critical to the patriot success. His determination, flexibility and knowledge of his native terrain all contributed to his success against the British. In occupying large British contingents, Marion and his fellow insurgent leaders gave Greene's army the ability to outlast Cornwallis' force in the Carolinas.

His centralized control ensured unity of effort, allowing his men the freedom of decentralized execution necessary in this type of warfare. His disdain for terror tactics against civilians gained him much support and helped to mobilize the population in support of the patriot cause. Marion's campaign of harassment tended to keep the British dispersed, while Greene's regular forces induced them to concentrate. John Derderer wrote of Greene's successful strategy to integrate insurgents into his campaign plans: "Greene's decision to incorporate guerrillas into his fundamental strategy was bold and innovative. Other generals, including Washington and Horatio Gates, encouraged partisan activities in their areas of operations, but Greene saw guerrillas as components integral to his strategy. A coordinated guerrilla-regular army campaign, or mobile war, greatly increased Greene's ability to take the war to his enemy while having the illusory effect of making his weak force appear larger."[56] Cornwallis ultimately proved unable to deal with the dichotomous challenges presented by Greene's regulars and Marion's irregulars, forcing him to quit the Carolinas.

Thomas Sumter: The Gamecock

The life of Thomas Sumter is shrouded in an obscurity unfamiliar to most leaders of the American Revolution. Although once subordinate to Sumter, Marion's exploits were venerated; and several biographies appeared following his death. Sumter received little historical treatment

[56] John M. Derderer, "Making Bricks Without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaigns and Mao Tse-Tung's Mobile War," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Oct 1983), 119.

following the war despite his continued service as a South Carolina legislator and subsequent elections to both the United States House of Representatives and the Senate. Nearly a half-century after Sumter's death Cecil B. Hartley included a brief fifty-page profile of Sumter in his biography of Henry Lee—another of Sumter's subordinates. Despite this dearth of literature, Sumter's fighting spirit and tenacity were well known on both sides during the American Revolutionary War.

Thomas Sumter's life began in rural western Virginia in July, 1734. The second of four children, Thomas was born to poor but hard-working English immigrants. He received a common-school education customary to the period, but natural intellect and personal experience contributed more to the future insurgent than the classroom. While working as a boy on his family farm and grist mill, he developed a strong work ethic. Sumter was also highly ambitious and incessantly sought ways to improve his circumstances. An undisciplined young man, he soon gained a reputation as a troublemaker. "Soon whispers were going around that Widow Sumter's younger son was a wild buck, devoted to gambling, cockfighting, and horse racing."[57] His activities put him at odds with authorities, and he was jailed on several occasions. This unruly nature and lack of discipline later were reflected in his leadership style. Sumter's continuing legal troubles eventually provided the impetus for a move to the Carolinas in 1764.

After his service during the French and Indian Wars and a subsequent trip to England, Sumter was penniless. He turned to the Governor of South Carolina for compensation for his service to the King and was awarded 700 British Pounds as payment. Sumter used the money to establish a store near Eutaw Springs at an economically important crossroads linking the coastal cities of Charlestown and Georgetown with the frontier. His store did well; and he quickly earned respect within the community, making good business decisions that expanded his fortune and influence.

While wildly independent, Thomas Sumter was a devoted family man who held his mother in the highest regard. After leaving Virginia he met a well-to-do widow of Carolina pedigree, and in 1767 he married Mary Jameson. A year later they had a son named Thomas, Junior. Sumter's devotion to his family often brought him home during the war. On more than one occasion, his troops bivouacked on his property during such visits. Although these stops

[57] Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), 7.

often slowed the campaign's progress, they appear to have provided balance to his turbulent nature.

Before the commencement of hostilities, Sumter's drive for success and recognition led him to business ventures and land speculation. He eventually expanded his family's holdings to over 14,000 acres. His new-found wealth gave him a level of recognition that led to his selection as a representative to the first Provincial Congress of South Carolina. He soon found that neither his accomplishments nor his military experience overshadowed the fact that he was not a Carolina native. As the colony began establishing its regular regiments, Sumter was disappointed that he was not considered for an officer's commission. "He realized that family, political influence, and adherence to the Low Country ruling group, as well as military experience and ability, were factors in the selections."[58] This did not last long. With the support of a respected militia friend, Colonel Richard Richardson, he soon joined the fight.

The Natural Soldier

Sumter's military life began at the height of the French and Indian War. A lean and powerful young man, he looked like a soldier. He joined the Virginia militia under Colonel Zacharia Burnley at about age twenty. As Native Americans began raiding English settlements along the Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie activated the militia; and Sumter spent the summer of 1756 training and drilling for the defense. While seeing no fighting during this period, Sumter knew he had found his calling as a soldier.[59]

Sumter's experience in the Virginia militia fulfilled his sense of adventure. He participated in Colonel William Byrd's campaign against Fort Duquesne and was promoted to sergeant based on his leadership and prowess. He was subsequently selected for the dangerous mission of delivering a notice of peace between the colonists and the Cherokee Indians to the mountain tribes. He soon proved his daring as his team negotiated freezing rivers and other dangers. His close relationship with the Cherokee people resulted in his selection by Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson to lead a delegation escorting Chief Ostenaco to England to meet King George III. This series of events did much to shape Sumter's leadership and fostered the active spirit that guided his later role as an insurgent leader.

[58] Bass, *Gamecock*, 26.
[59] Bass, *Gamecock*, 7.

After the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War, he was eventually offered a commission as a captain and participated in several campaigns of little consequence. For his successful role in the Snow Campaign, in which Colonel Richard Richardson's militia repulsed a Tory uprising, Sumter was elected as lieutenant colonel in command of the Second Regiment of Riflemen. Like Marion, he served in the first defense of Charleston. Over the next two years Sumter's regiment garrisoned the frontier against Cherokee attack and participated in General Robert Howe's campaign in Georgia. These activities did little to stimulate Sumter's active spirit, and morale within the regiment soon began to deteriorate.

Sumter did not possess Marion's sense of discipline. During periods of inactivity, rather than drilling his men, Sumter often resorted to competitive sports to maintain a loose esprit de corps.[60] While he could inflict swift punishment for infractions, he often left this task to his subordinate commanders. This lack of discipline produced a loss of morale. The boredom of occupation duty, coupled with the sickness and disease of close-quarters living, took its toll on his troops, many of which deserted or resigned to return home. Tensions also grew between the regular and militia troops, and General Howe ordered the Carolina regulars home.

During this period Sumter became ill and returned to his plantation to recuperate. Upon return from Georgia, his regiment was placed under General William Moultrie's force; and Sumter did not rejoin them. Frustrated over a period of service that saw little action and resulted in a less-than-distinguished record, Sumter tendered his resignation from service in 1778 and retired to his plantation.[61]

The Making of the Carolina Gamecock

His return to life on the plantation did not remain quiet for long. He was elected to the General Assembly in November 1778 and resumed his political activity to advance his personal fortune.[62] As the British began their assault on the South in earnest in 1780, Sumter watched the gathering storm from his plantation. While his loyalty to the patriot cause never wavered, he remained indifferent to the retreating force and "volunteered neither service nor advice to his beleaguered countrymen."[63] His only active effort at the time was to move his family out of the

[60] Bass, *Gamecock*, 57.
[61] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 40.
[62] Bass, *Gamecock*, 48.
[63] Bass, *Gamecock*, 51.

line of British advance to their summer home in the High Hills of Santee.

As British forces moved north in June 1780, Colonel Tarleton rounded up patriot supporters and burned their homes. When Thomas Sumter, Jr., informed his father of the approaching forces the senior Sumter, knowing he would be considered a fugitive, bade his family farewell and left to spare them and their home. Not finding Sumter at home, the British soldiers evacuated everyone from the house and set it ablaze. From the cover of the swamp he witnessed his family being driven from their home and forced to watch as it was burned.[64] Incensed by this act, Sumter rode north to recruit a guerrilla force.

Sumter's reemergence on the battlefield reflects the failed British policy of reprisal attacks on the population. As Joes notes, "The causes and consequences of Sumter's reentry into the fray, reminiscent of Andrew Pickens's, are surely unanswerable proofs that when those who claim authority act in an illegal and vengeful manner, or permit their subordinates so to act, they are guilty of profound folly."[65] The burning of Sumter's house brought him out of retirement and created an insurgent who plagued British operations for the remainder of the war.

As word spread that Sumter had rejoined the fight, he was joined by many men from his regiment and over 200 Catawba Indians. Sumter and his group moved south from Salisbury to join other groups who had gathered to stand against the British. At this meeting Sumter was elected to lead the force and on 15 June 1780 was promoted to brigadier general. From that point forward, Sumter's command remained a formidable counter to the British occupation.

Sumter quickly began to secure weapons and recruits. He called upon the Gillespie family, firearms makers near Charlotte, who were also famous for developing a line of blue-hackled gamecocks. It is believed that during negotiations over securing rifles that Sumter's stately appearance in his blue Continental army uniform, coupled with his widespread reputation for never refusing a fight, inspired these men to coin his famous moniker. Hartley opined that "The sobriquet stuck to him always after; and the eagerness with which he sought his enemy on all occasions, and frequently without duly measuring the inequalities of the parties, amply justified, in the opinion of his followers, the *nom de guerre* of the 'Game Cock.'"[66]

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[64] Cecil B. Hartley, *The Life of Major General Henry Lee*, (Philadelphia, PA: G.G. Evans, 1859), 308.
[65] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 40.
[66] Hartley, *The Life of Major General Henry Lee*, 309.

The Gamecock's reputation was based on his tenacity and fearlessness in battle. "He was a hammer-and-tongs type of fighter, who had little patience with the parade-ground formalities of army life."[67] Not as disciplined as Marion, Sumter's forces often fought in organized chaos. This lack of discipline freed him from many of the inhibitions of gentlemanly war and led to his technique of defeating the enemy in any way possible and at all costs. Victory over the enemy was his goal, but how he achieved it was of little consequence. As Hartley noted, "he was not over scrupulous as a soldier in his use of means, and apt to make considerable allowances for state of war. Believing it warranted by the necessity of the case, he did not occupy his mind with critical examinations of the equity of his measures, or of their bearings on individuals; but indiscriminately pressed forward to his end the destruction of his enemy and liberation of his country."[68]

Although not a native of the Carolinas, Sumter had developed relationships and knew the area extremely well prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Like Marion, his knowledge allowed him and his men to conduct operations with relative impunity. This understanding gave him the distinct advantage of almost always knowing where the enemy was and how best to strike.

By constantly attacking and harassing the British, Sumter contributed greatly to Greene's success. His men provided important intelligence; as Greene maneuvered his army. "Most of all, the guerrillas exhausted the British forces with ceaseless alarms and pursuits and searches. In these ways they made an effective British concentration against Greene's army nearly impossible."[69] As Cornwallis directed greater numbers of his forces against these insurgent bands, he thinned his forces, which prevented him from concentrating to destroy Greene's army.

Although Sumter's impatience often led him to take overly hasty action, he was also highly innovative in his tactics and adapted quickly to various situations. Knowing little of ancient history, he was noted to have built a Roman-style siege tower that exposed the British and loyalist troops to direct fire. Sumter often directed his men to strip arms and ammunition from the enemy dead as supplies ran short. He was also noted for employing Catawba Indians to track loyalists hiding in the swamps.[70] This ingenuity gave Sumter the ability to maintain the field in spite of his manpower and logistic shortages.

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[67] Chidsey, *The War in the South*, 87.
[68] Hartley, *The Life of Major General Henry Lee*, 313.
[69] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 41.
[70] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 41.

Sumter's most notable success was the defeat of Tarleton on 20 November 1780 at Blackstock's House. As his men encamped, Sumter learned that Tarleton's Green Dragoons and an attached infantry regiment were moving along the Enoree River in his direction. Knowing that his position between Tarleton and the British garrison at Ninety-Six put them in a precarious position, Sumter determined he had to fight.[71] As Tarleton's forces engaged Sumter's rear guard, Sumter set his men in an organized retreat designed to wear down Tarleton's forces and move to better ground.

Falling back to defensible positions on Blackstock's Hill, Sumter prepared to engage Tarleton before the British artillery could join the main force. Sumter immediately engaged the British with his infantry. With the dragoons distracted, Sumter's cavalry struck their flank, inflicting considerable losses. While riding through the fight, Sumter was hit in the chest and shoulder. When told he had been hit, he informed the officer to "say nothing about it."[72] Not wanting to demoralize his troops, he continued to direct the battle until he could no longer stand. At that point, he turned over command and allowed himself to be removed from the field. Under the cover of darkness, Sumter's forces gave the field to Tarleton. Although Tarleton claimed victory, the losses told a different story. Tarleton had lost 92 dead and 100 wounded to Sumter's three killed and four wounded, including Sumter.[73] By choosing suitable ground, Sumter had negated Tarleton's initiative and inflicted considerable losses on Tarleton's forces. Although Sumter required several months to recuperate from his wounds, the battle was a significant boost to patriot morale.

The lack of a formal government in the Carolinas often led insurgent leaders to impose their own rules as unofficial laws. One of the most notable examples of this was the creation of "Sumter's Law." Resource constraints often limited the number of men Sumter could employ.

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[71] The town of Ninety-Six, South Carolina was an outpost along the Carolina frontier established before the war to defend the colony against hostile Indian tribes to the west. Its name is believed to come from its distance (ninety-six miles) from the Cherokee capitol of Keowee (modern day Clemson, SC). It was the location of the first battle of the Revolutionary War in the south (1755) as loyalist forces seized the fort. Colonel Richardson's patriot militia forces soon wrested control of the fort back from the loyalists, but the fort eventually fell to the British during their invasion of the south. The British reinforced the stockade and the star fort in 1780 and garrisoned the town until their eventual retirement from the Carolinas. Between May and June 1781 General Greene's regulars sieged the star-fort and stockade at Nintey-Six, but were unable to oust the British from the well-defended position. Marion and Sumter played a vital role in slowing British reinforcements from Charleston, thus allowing General Greene to lift the siege and withdraw unopposed on 20 June 1781. www.townofninetysixsc.com/historic-96/history; http://www.nps.gov/nisi/historyculture/index.htm, (accessed 3 May 2012).

[72] Bass, *Gamecock*, 107.

[73] Bass, *Gamecock*, 109.

This law stipulated that patriot forces could loot loyalist homes and farms for food and supplies without fear of reprisal from him. While this put Sumter's men in better circumstances than Marion's men often enjoyed, it no doubt led to contempt by the locals and possibly reversed other patriot efforts to turn loyalists against the British.

Thomas Sumter was clearly not without his deficiencies as a leader. One of his greatest attributes was also one of his chief faults—his independent spirit. Although Sumter had served in the Continental army, he often disregarded the orders of Continental commanders. He was noted to have not answered General de Kalb's summoning of militia forces to Hillsborough as he "preferred to keep the field with his own command, for he never did work well with anybody else."[74] This indifference to authority continued for the remainder of the war. As Anthony Joes noted, Sumter "did not submit with grace to authority. He and his men disliked the command of General Greene, and there was much misunderstanding and friction between regulars and guerrillas."[75] This defied the edict every young leader learns—to be a good leader, you must first be a good follower.

Summary

Thomas Sumter ended his career as an insurgent leader before the war concluded. In January 1782, with the British pushed out of the Carolinas and a returning government presence, Sumter tendered his resignation to Governor Rutledge. This enabled him to pursue his political ambitions in the upcoming General Assembly elections, but was no doubt partly influenced by his disdain for his leaders.[76] Mark Clodfelter noted that "Sumter's Law could no longer guide army conduct. Rutledge repudiated the policy and issued a proclamation against plundering in early August. In disgust, Sumter offered the governor his resignation. Rutledge accepted it, ending the flamboyant career of the Fighting Gamecock."[77]

Thomas Sumter was possibly the most effective tactician of mobile guerrilla warfare of the war.[78] His ability to strike the enemy hard and quickly disappear kept the British forces on edge. His strong will made him a commanding presence. His front-line leadership and

[74] Chidsey, *The War in the South*, 93.
[75] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 41.
[76] Bass, *Gamecock*, 216.
[77] Mark Clodfelter, "Between Virtue and Necessity: Nathanael Greene and the Conduct of Civil-Military Relations in the South, 1780-1782", *Military Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Oct., 1988), 173.
[78] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 43.

willingness to suffer with his men gained him a valuable level of respect from his soldiers. Frontier living no doubt shaped his independent spirit and ingenuity. His local knowledge facilitated his ability to employ effective guerrilla tactics against the enemy. These traits, coupled with his flexibility and resourcefulness, made Thomas Sumter an imposing force against the British.

Thomas Sumter's brash nature and indifference to higher authority, however, detracted from his success. His reputation for carelessness in observing the rules of war and his reluctance to take orders blemished his otherwise laudable leadership qualities.[79] While politically savvy, Sumter was not as strategically adept as either Greene or Marion. His inability to recognize the negative effects of Sumter's Law and his use of terror tactics show he did not always see the big picture. His indifference to higher authority occasionally left Greene shorthanded on the battlefield, and on one occasion Greene considered court-martialing him.[80] Were it not for Sumter's success, General Greene would have certainly removed Sumter from his command.

Although Sumter was never General Greene's most devoted subordinate, Greene credited Sumter's invaluable contribution to the war effort in a letter to General Washington: "Unlike Lee, his revolutionary services were confined to the South, but on this field they were of inestimable value. He was the first of the partisan chieftains who openly took the field after the fall of Charleston; and for a considerable period he was considered by Lord Cornwallis the most troublesome of all his opponents."[81] General Greene's words reflect not only Sumter's contribution, but more importantly the significance of the patriot insurgents in the eventual British defeat.

Chapter Conclusions

The American Revolution was largely a conventional war aided by heavy reliance on insurgent activity in the south. As John Tierney noted, "a full-scale partisan war was never advocated by either Congress or by any important military leader."[82] Many leaders, including George Washington, understood the negative effects an insurgency could have on the cause. A conventional force was doubtlessly a necessary tool to unite the colonies in a common cause. It

[79] Theodore Thayer, *Nathanael Greene: Strategist of the American Revolution,* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960), 297.
[80] Francis Vinton Greene, *General Greene*, (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1893), 265.
[81] Hartley, *The Life of Major General Henry Lee*, 4.
[82] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts,* 49.

also served as the martial bona fides of a fledgling state. The discipline of the Continental army ensured force was limited to engaging the British army and not inflicting harm on the populace through retaliation. However, by employing insurgent forces in support of the army, the continental leaders were able to occupy large numbers of British soldiers, thus reducing their superior strength and leveling the odds.

The southern campaign conducted by General Greene was critical to the overall American victory. Greene understood that his small, ill-equipped army had to depend on the militia and partisan forces of the southern states. In the southern campaign the regular forces worked in harmony with the irregular forces. Greene knew he would have to utilize every resource at his disposal to defeat the British and skillfully integrated regulars, state militia, and guerrilla fighters into his operations. "In the end, Greene's strategy of mobilizing the entire Carolina countryside to support his Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia regulars proved the key to winning the south once and for all."[83] Greene's forces would not have succeeded in slowly bleeding the British forces to capitulation had it not been for his ability to rally the Carolinians in support of his effort.

Greene was fortunate to have such a fine collection of insurgent commanders. As Francis Greene later noted, "what the army lacked in men and resources, it partially made up in the superb character of its chiefs."[84] General Greene knew that Marion and Sumter's forces were critical to defeating the British. Marion and Sumter understood this as well, but they also shrewdly recognized that their force was limited and that their efforts alone would not be enough to secure victory in the Carolinas.[85]

Marion's leadership was vital to the expulsion of the British forces from the Carolinas. His understanding of the strategic context of Greene's plan allowed him to employ his limited force effectively. His innovative tactics and local knowledge gave him a decided advantage over the British and forced Lord Cornwallis to dedicate large numbers of his men countering Marion's raids. The centralized planning and decentralized execution he employed exemplifies the importance of mission command in irregular warfare. Marion's disciplined nature and distaste

[83] Lawrence E. Babits, "Greene's Strategy in the Southern Campaign, 1780-1781, *Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century*. Edited by Maarten Ultee. (University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1986), 149.
[84] Greene, *General Greene*, 169.
[85] Zedric and Dilley, *Elite Warriors*, 62.

for wonton violence also ensured he did not harm the patriot cause by alienating the citizens. Francis Marion's example provides the modern military practitioner with a solid grounding in effective insurgent leadership.

Thomas Sumter also provides several important insights into effective leadership in irregular warfare. While temperamentally more impetuous than his counterpart, Sumter was a skilled tactician whose planning successfully exploited every possible advantage. His surprise attacks were enabled by his knowledge of the terrain. The expert marksmanship of his frontier fighters and their ability to hit hard and quickly retreat were tactics the British were never able to counter.[86] His front-line leadership enabled him to outmaneuver the enemy and economize his limited forces. While the importance of Sumter's role in General Greene's southern campaign is unquestionable, his leadership flaws limit his utility as a model of insurgent leadership. Contemporary military practitioners can benefit from Sumter's exemplar by understanding how strong personalities can lead to undisciplined decisions that may hinder mission success.

Overall, Marion and Sumter exemplified the American fighting spirit. Their adaptability and innovation demonstrate the importance of these traits in insurgent warfare. They also exemplify the advantage native insurgents have over external forces in gaining the support of the local population. Marion's disciplined, yet decentralized operations highlight the effectiveness of the concept of mission command in insurgent warfare. Sumter's struggle with authority and vengeful motivations demonstrated how these negative traits can hinder an otherwise successful operation. The contemporary military leader can benefit by understanding the effects of both the positive and negative traits these men demonstrated. The following chapter further analyzes insurgent leadership traits by examining the campaigns of Nathan Bedford Forrest and John Singleton Mosby during the American Civil War.

[86] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 45.

Chapter 2

The American Civil War: Confederate Insurgents

That devil Forrest was down about Johnsonville, making havoc among the gunboats and transports.

-General William T. Sherman

In classic guerrilla style, Mosby led his irregular unit as an adjunct of the regular units. With an average force of five hundred men, using mostly pistols and other small arms, he made occupation a hell on earth for Union armies in Virginia.

-John Tierney

This chapter examines the insurgent roles of Nathan Bedford Forrest and John Singleton Mosby during the American Civil War. It begins with a contextual overview of the American Civil War that assesses the irregular aspects of the war and the dynamics that sparked the rebellion. It then studies the lives of Nathan Bedford Forrest and John Singleton Mosby. By analyzing their developmental years, the author seeks to determine the influences on their roles as insurgents and how these traits influenced their leadership styles. It concludes with analysis of their insurgent roles in the American Civil War and the leadership qualities each man demonstrated.

The American Civil War

The American Civil War is possibly the most documented period in American history. Few events have had such a significant effect on the American landscape and people. America's bloodiest war, the military death toll alone was over 620,000.[87] The southern economy was devastated, requiring decades of reconstruction. The enterprise of slavery was abolished. New technologies changed the face of war. The railroad, telegraph, and repeating rifles became the starting points for future warfare. Most importantly, cultural and ideological divisions that had plagued the nation from its beginning were finally resolved. The post-war reconciliation eventually united the people, and from the war's ashes rose an emerging nation that soon became a world power.

The American Civil War's particularity lies in the fact that it was primarily prosecuted as a conventional conflict. This is noteworthy because as Stathis Kalyvas stated: "a striking

[87] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 854.

empirical observation is that very few civil wars are fought by means of conventional warfare."[88] Civil war is generally considered a form of irregular warfare that occupies the space between conventional and irregular wars.[89] Although the American Civil War was very much a conventional war, insurgent efforts contributed noticeably to its fabric.

The cause of the American Civil War remains hotly debated, but there is no doubt that the chain of events began long before the first shots were fired in April 1861. As noted in Chapter 2, cultural differences, as well as opposing views on slavery, pre-dated the Revolutionary War. There remained a social divide between the North's industrial-based, urban society and the rural, agrarian south. The issue of slavery and southern fears that the federal government was unduly interfering with state sovereignty created tensions between north and south that by 1861 could no longer be resolved through political means.

While the young nation expanded, polarized factions sought to influence the slaveholding policies of new states. Abolitionists pushed for all newly established states to be free while the slaveholding states argued that slavery should be allowed. This divergence produced the concept of popular sovereignty, advocated by Senators Henry Clay and Stephen A. Douglas, which gave new states the ability to determine their own status.

The first clash arose from the Missouri Compromise of 1850. To settle the debate over how California would enter the Union, Kentucky Senator Henry Clay and, subsequently, Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas proposed allowing California to enter as a free state. The compromise for the southern delegates included the provision that the Utah and New Mexico territories could choose their status. It also included the Fugitive Slave Law that required northerners to return fugitive slaves to their owners.[90] Passage of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act created further tensions, as it allowed the territories of Kansas and Nebraska each to determine its status. While these acts set precedent for popular sovereignty in future states, northern states strongly opposed the Fugitive Slave Law and refused to enforce it. Abolitionists also opposed the concept of popular sovereignty. While they assumed that Nebraska's northern geography would naturally lead to entry as a free state, Kansas's proximity to Missouri made its fate less certain. Northern abolitionists and slavery supporters from Missouri soon poured into the territory to influence the

[88] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 83.
[89] James Kiras, "Irregular Warfare," in David Jordan, James Kiras, et al, *Understanding Modern Warfare*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 236.
[90] http://www.ushistory.org/us/30d (accessed 7 May 2012).

vote. Fighting ensued; and although the pro-slavery vote prevailed, the state failed to gain acceptance to the Union. Only when the southern states seceded were Kansas free-state advocates able to enter the Union.

The critical points of the division between north and south remained the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Virginia. These states became microcosms of the conflict's polarity. Missouri demonstrated affinity with both sides throughout the war. Kentucky and Maryland ultimately voted to stay with the Union but remained divided and raised regiments that fought for both north and south. While Virginia voted to secede in April 1861, most of the western portion of the state remained loyal to the Union. The trans-Allegheny counties eventually voted to rejoin the Union. On 20 June 1863 they were admitted into the Union as the State of West Virginia.

Alignment of the border states was critical to the outcome of the war. In addition to manpower, they also provided significant resources for the side they ultimately joined. Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland "would have added forty-five percent to the white population and military manpower of the Confederacy, eighty percent to its manufacturing capacity, and nearly forty percent to its supply of horses and mules."[91] Had these three states ultimately joined the Confederacy, the outcome of the Civil War could have been much different.

Much of the country was also divided. Secession from the Union was also not guaranteed across the south. Many southerners strongly supported the Union, including a number of prominent Confederate leaders. Votes to secede from the Union in 1861 were very close in the Deep South states of Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana. In eastern Tennessee, Senator Andrew Johnson refused to secede and retained his seat in the federal Senate, while eastern Tennessee debated about breaking away from the west and forming a pro-Union state.[92] Because many southerners remained pro-Union after their home states seceded, the Union army was bolstered by a large number of southerners. In all, nearly 120,000 southerners fought for the Union, and Union regiments were raised in all eleven of the Confederate states.

The war was also shaped by the personal motivations of the participants. Influential men were ultimately forced to choose sides. Federal officers of southern birth often fought for the Confederacy. Because state ties remained strong, many resigned their federal positions as their

[91] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 284.
[92] Anthony James Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 72.

home states seceded from the Union. Notable Confederate leaders such as Robert E. Lee, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, and John Bell Hood had served with distinction in the federal army, but chose to resign their commissions in solidarity with their home states. Other notable southern men choose to remain loyal to the Union. Union General-in-Chief Winfield Scott was a Virginian whose loyalty remained with the Union. Admiral David Farragut, a Tennessean also stayed loyal to the Union, playing a pivotal role in the navy's success against Confederate ports.

Because many of the military leaders were West Point classmates and had fought together in previous wars, the Civil War was characterized by an intimacy unknown to most conflicts. From the first shot of the war to the South's final surrender, former brothers-in-arms fought fiercely to defeat one another. The war began with Confederate General Beauregard directing his Charleston-based artillery against Fort Sumter. In command of the fort was Beauregard's former West Point artillery instructor, Major Robert Anderson.[93] The war ended at the McLean home in Appomattox Court House, Virginia as General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to General Ulysses S. Grant. Grant soberly accepted the surrender of the man who less than two decades previously had commended Grant for his role in the attack on Mexico City.[94]

The fact that leaders on both sides shared much in common made the conflict particularly intense. Generals on both sides shared similar views of how to conduct their battles. Theorist Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini's concept of concentrating at a decisive point to defeat the enemy had been instilled in a small but important group of West Point graduates by Dennis Hart Mahan.[95] The apparent success of Jominian concepts during the Mexican War may have led Confederate generals to the belief that they had to defeat the larger Union army on the field of battle.

Both sides also believed initially that the war would be short. The idea that a decisive battle would quickly decide the contest pervaded both camps at the start of the war. The realities of the conflict soon brought about a lethal, protracted war previously unknown to the United States. "It was a war characterized by massive mobilization efforts on both sides, destruction of resources and property on an immense scale, and the development of punitive practices and

[93] Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1994), 162.
[94] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 5.
[95] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 331.

policies towards civilians."[96] The war, unlimited in both ends and means, brought bloody fighting on all fronts that eventually led to a grim calculus of attrition.

Even before the exodus of southern officers to the Confederacy, the Federal army was quite small. In order to raise the requisite forces the Federals initially sought volunteers on ninety-day enlistments. As heavy casualties and the scope of the conflict became apparent, the Union began a national draft in 1863. While the draft succeeded in raising 776,000 potential enrollees, various exemptions and failures to report resulted in only 46,000 men entering the Union army.[97] Ultimately, however, more than two million men served in the Union army, which reached one million men at its peak. The overwhelming manpower advantage the Union held eventually overcame inefficiencies of the draft mechanisms.

The Confederate army suffered similar pains in raising a large force. "States' rights enthusiasts also disrupted southern harmony. The Confederate Constitution guaranteed state sovereignty. Unwilling to surrender much state power, prominent politicians such as Vice President Alexander H. Stephens and Governors Joseph E. Brown of Georgia and Zebulon B. Vance of North Carolina resisted the centralization of authority necessary for efficient warmaking."[98] States sought to retain their forces within their own borders. The inability of the Confederate army to concentrate various state contingents into a cohesive force left much of the early fighting to Virginians based solely on their geographic relation to the Union. Confederate efforts were not concentrated in a unified force against the Federal army until late in the war.

The Confederate army fielded roughly 750,000 men, reaching a maximum strength of 464,500 in late 1863. The near-total mobilization of southern white males created a significant dilemma for the Confederacy. As men joined the thin, gray ranks, an increasingly limited number of workers were available for agriculture, mines, foundries, and supply bureaus. Inadequate manpower eventually contributed to the South's inability to produce the war materiel required to feed and supply it forces.[99]

The Union strategy evolved gradually, ultimately combining exhaustion and annihilation. General Winfield Scott's "Anaconda Plan" envisioned an exhaustion strategy in the western

[96] Clay Mountcastle, *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals*, (Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas, 2009), 20.
[97] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 601.
[98] Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 167.
[99] Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 163.

theater, where the rivers provided routes for penetrating into the South's most important resource areas, combined with annihilation in the constricted eastern theater, where Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia blocked any south-ward advance.[100]

The plan was intended to weaken southern resolve with a minimum of lost property and resources. Scott understood that to bring the south back into the fold, the war would have to be carefully waged. He warned against a war of conquest for fear of creating an unmanageable peace at the end.[101] Instead the war became total. According to Millett and Maslowski, "Since both sides fought for unlimited objectives — the North for reunion and (eventually) emancipation, the South for independence and slavery's preservation — a compromise solution was impossible. No short, restrained war could convince either side to yield; only a prolonged and brutal struggle would resolve the issue."[102]

Most studies of the American Civil War focus on the major battles in the east. With the exception of Vicksburg, Shiloh, and Chickamauga, many of the major engagements in the west remain relatively obscure. It is important to note that like the Revolutionary War in the south, where insurgent warfare dominated, the predominance of irregular fighting in the western theater of the Civil War has received much less scholarship than its eastern equivalent.

Much of the fighting in the east consisted of large conventional engagements. While such engagements in the west were rare, raids, sieges, and large cavalry battles were commonplace. The major set-piece battles of the east were often complemented by insurgent fighters. As John Tierney argued, "In the Western theater, regular armies rarely encountered each other in the field; the area was wide open for irregular and terrorist ambush."[103] Insurgent fighters, primarily in the role of raiders, also supported the conventional fight in the west, but much of the west's insurgent violence was independent and had little impact on the conventional war. By war's end, insurgencies became less important as the Union campaigns of attrition slowly degraded the Confederate army's strength.

[100] Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 170.
[101] Mountcastle, *Punitive War*, 19.
[102] Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 162.
[103] John J. Tierney, Jr., *Chasing Ghosts: Unconventional Warfare in American History*, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2006), 62.

Insurgency: The Uncivil War

Only a small amount of the Civil War's literature examines its irregular component. As Robert Mackey observed, "few biographers and historians have noted the existence, much less the influence, of irregular warfare during the American Civil War."[104] Many of the early works on the subject provide what modern historians regard as overly romanticized accounts. For example, Nathan Bedford Forrest's attack on Union gunboats near Johnsonville, Tennessee, is legendary for its daring. The Union scout James Andrews' attempt to steal a locomotive and destroy the Western and Atlantic railroad in northern Georgia was no less exciting. These and many other insurgent acts were romantic and bold in their execution, but this quality often hides the dark underside of insurgent warfare. Many histories fail to relate the hardship and depredation that the Civil War's insurgencies inflicted on its participants and civilian populations.

America's recent counterinsurgent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, coupled with the Civil War's sesquicentennial, has inspired a resurgent effort to explore this subject. Several new works have introduced a fresh approach to understanding the Confederate insurgency and provide a clear-headed analysis of the irregular undertones of the American Civil War. Robert Mackey's *The Uncivil War* and Daniel Sutherland's *A Savage Conflict* link nineteenth-century ideas about guerrilla and partisan warfare to the twentieth-century concept of insurgency. These and other modern works are useful in providing an understanding of the role of insurgency during the Civil War. They also argue that insurgency could not have brought Confederate victory by itself, and certainly not in the haphazard ways it was generally prosecuted.

As previously noted, the Civil War was fought largely with conventional means. As the fighting began, "both armies were focused solely on what they believed would be a quick, conventional war fought in the classic European style."[105] This idea of quick victory led leaders on both sides to believe that a single battle, or series of battles, would soon resolve the war. Although the South eventually recognized the benefit of guerrillas, or insurgents, "large numbers of Confederates wanted to fight as guerrillas in the spring of 1861."[106] No doubt influenced by

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[104] Robert R. Mackey, *The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861-1865*, (Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 17.
[105] Mountcastle, *Punitive War*, 8.
[106] Donald E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), ix.

the legend of southern Revolutionary War insurgents, many believed this the most effective way to defeat the Union. While some historians continue to argue that the South should have adopted a strategy similar to Greene's Southern campaign, Confederate leaders adamantly opposed the scheme. Southern geography and rural landscape no doubt provided the helpful conditions for insurgency, but the inability to control disparate bands over vast distances put waging a war of this type beyond the imagination and desires of the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, and Lee, his chief lieutenant.

Professional soldiers have often considered irregular warfare to be dishonorable form of fighting. Although Lee eventually supported Mosby's partisan role, he remained skeptical of independent guerrilla operations and noted pointedly: "I regard the whole system as an unmixed evil."[107] Lee and others understood that unregulated guerrillas could quickly devolve into murderous bands that degraded the overall effort. While the Civil War provides ample evidence to support this belief, it also provides examples of insurgency's ability to complement the conventional war effort.

To understand the nature of insurgency during the Civil War, several concepts must be addressed. First is defining the form. Contrary to popular belief the major insurgent efforts of the war were not guerrilla operations. Rather, they fit Jomini's construct of partisan warfare.[108] Partisan warfare refers to the employment of small, elite conventional forces that serve in an unconventional capacity. "Partisans were members of organized units, and the best were tightly controlled by their parent field armies."[109] In this regard, partisan efforts were similar to those of Marion and Sumter in supporting General Greene's Southern campaign.

Robert Mackey has clearly described the partisan's role during the Civil War: "The Confederacy attempted to fight an irregular conflict in conjunction with the conventional war, doing so within the limits of nineteenth-century concepts of guerrilla, partisan, and raiding warfare. These forms of unconventional warfare, though sharing some traits with guerrilla wars of the twentieth-century, were not intended to instigate an insurgent movement behind enemy

[107] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 61.
[108] Jomini describes the use of partisans in the role of gathering intelligence on enemy dispositions. While useful in gaining information, he notes the difficulties they have in breaking away to pass on the information they possess. It is in this capacity that partisans were primarily intended to serve during the Civil War. Antoine-Henri, Baron de Jomini, *The Art of War*, translated by Capt. G. H. Mendell and Lt. W.P. Craighill, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2007), 246.
[109] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 7.

lines. Instead the Confederate irregular forces were intended to be an adjunct to the conventional field armies."[110]

Insurgent warfare in the west was much different. There, much of the wanton violence that demonized the insurgent effort occurred. As Tierney noted, "In the West, Missouri in particular, the irregular conflict erased the thin line between combatant and civilian and between soldier and guerrilla, and it was often impossible to distinguish between sides."[111] Fighting that began before the war expanded significantly under the umbrella of the larger conflict. Savagery against civilians was commonplace as disparate criminals led their own reprisals and insurrections. Anthony Joes summarized the disparities between the two theaters: "At the opposite end of the war from Mosby, geographically and morally, stands another Confederate guerrilla leader, the most notorious of all the bloodstained characters churned up by the dread struggle: the sociopath William Clarke Quantrill."[112]

Quantrill's notorious operations in Missouri provide substantial evidence that western insurgencies functioned independently of the larger effort. Mark Moyar also examined the negative effects of the insurgent campaign in Arkansas. He noted the volatility of undisciplined guerrilla groups, "The guerrilla companies acquired a knack for pillaging. When the Confederate regular army learned of their misdeeds and told them to desist, they began fighting the Confederate army as well as the Union one. Until the war's end, guerrillas plundered Arkansans of all political persuasions, reserving special harshness for Unionists, and their crimes severely weakened support for the Confederate cause in the state. Guerrillas with virtuous leaders, on the other hand, ably defended their counties against Union forces and retained the approval of the public."[113] These observations demonstrate that guerrillas can be effective if employed for a positive end. But left uncontrolled, they can undermine the overall effort.

Passage of the Partisan Ranger Act of 27 March 1862 was hotly contested in the Confederacy.[114] It was intended to create an elite, semi-conventional force able to gather intelligence and direct precise raids against the Union forces. Although based on cavalry, the

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[110] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 5.
[111] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 63.
[112] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 57.
[113] Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 27.
[114] Lance Q. Zedric and Michael F. Dilley, *Elite Warriors: 300 Years of America's Best Fighting Troops*, Ventura, CA: Pathfinder Publishing, 1996), 85.

partisan forces conducted missions similar to those of contemporary Army Rangers. While Confederate Generals James Ewell Brown Stuart and Robert E. Lee understood the importance of these operations, others did not see their significance. "Those who opposed the Partisan Ranger Act believed that these units were unnecessary and that it was sneaky and illegal not fighting toe-to-toe with the enemy. Others believed that such units drained the resources and best people from conventional commanders engaged directly with the enemy."[115]

Union reprisals, in addition to the less than commendable performance of many of the partisan ranger units, resulted in Lee's disbanding the units in the spring of 1864. The need for additional men also influenced his decision, as members of the units were integrated into regular formations. The only unit Lee did not disband at this time was Lieutenant Colonel Mosby's Forty-third Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, due to its unmatched performance.[116] Mosby's command remained the only partisan force in the east until Lee's surrender to Grant in April 1865.

Arguably the most important aspect of the Confederate insurgency was its ability to occupy significant numbers of Union forces. For example, Forrest and Morgan's 2,500-strong cavalry force were able to engage nearly 40,000 of General Ulysses Grant's Union soldiers during his crucial Vicksburg campaign in 1863.[117] This greatly reduced the Union army's manpower advantage, frequently resulting in conventional battles being fought between forces of roughly equal size.

Numerous Union units were also dispatched into Mosby's area of operations to capture him. Counterinsurgent efforts in Virginia led by Union Generals William Rosecrans and Philip Sheridan drained Union forces of effective leaders and men. At one point, Rosecrans requested twenty-thousand Union troops to counter Mosby's two thousand. [118] Had this request been honored, it would have significantly reduced the fighting strength of the Union's Army of the Potomac.

The following analysis assesses the irregular operations of Forrest and Mosby during the American Civil War. It demonstrates that their irregular operations were effective as adjuncts to the conventional effort and were equally important when the leaders operated independently.

[115] Zedric and Dilley, *Elite Warriors*, 85.
[116] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 72.
[117] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 52.
[118] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 57.

The Wizard in the Saddle

The history of Nathan Bedford Forrest has been unduly influenced by the post-war writings of victorious northern historians. Although Forrest himself would refute neither the grisliness of the actions at Fort Pillow, nor his short-lived, but prominent affiliation with the Ku-Klux Klan, these events have been given exaggerated influence by those with northern sympathies in order to demonize Forrest. As Forrest biographer John Allan Wyeth noted: "There were other reasons that contributed to Forrest's tarnished reputation. The northern press singled him out at the great evil bogeyman of the Confederacy, and added fabrication upon rumor till he became anathema to Northern sympathizers. Part of this was due to his background as onetime slave trader. Part of it was caused by his ferocious ultimatums to surrounded Federal garrisons to surrender or he would not be responsible for the lives of the defenders when the position was taken...Forrest was no angel and he waged war to the hilt, but neither was he the monster that many made him out to be."[119] The sensationalized depictions of Forrest no doubt rallied Union resolve, but they also obscured the genius of his leadership.

Early Years

Nathan Bedford Forrest was born on 13 July 1821 in the Bedford County town of Chapel Hill, Tennessee. He was the eldest of eleven children, eight boys and three girls. His parents, William and Mariam Beck Forrest, were plain, honest, and hard-working; and they instilled these traits in their children. J. Harvey Mathes argued that Forrest's English, Scotch, and Irish lineage provided "the qualities of courage, tenacity of purpose, clearness of judgment, and alertness of action which enabled him to ever make the best of trying occasions, and to become one of the famous cavalry leaders of the world."[120]

In 1834, the Forrests moved to Tippah County in northwest Mississippi to expand their land-holdings and improve their circumstances. Following his father's death in 1837, Nathan became the primary provider for his mother and family. Soon after, two of his brothers and all three sisters died from a malaria and typhoid outbreak. Although Forrest was also struck by the illness, his strong constitution and will aided his recovery. Mariam Forrest remarried in 1843 to

[119] John Allan Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest: Life of General Nathan Bedford Forrest*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1959), xii.
[120] J. Harvey Mathes, *General Forrest*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1902), 2.

Joseph Luxton and gave birth to three more sons and one daughter. Six of Nathan's brothers would eventually serve the Confederate cause.

Forrest had an active and robust life.[121] He enjoyed the outdoors, as was common in rural nineteenth-century America; and the harshness of the outdoors perhaps contributed to his fearlessness in battle. He also had a violent temper that he fought to control.[122] Coupled with his substantial physique, he was a powerful force.

Formal education on the early frontier was limited, and the rural country schools of the day commonly operated for only three months each year. Due to this limited opportunity and the need to support his family, Forrest had only about six months of formal education.[123] This did little to hinder him. His natural intellect and determination proved more important to his later performance than formal schooling.

Early in life Forrest began to display the daring traits that made him an effective leader. On one occasion, his mother and aunt were travelling on horseback when a panther attacked Mariam, killing her horse. After ensuring her safety at home, Forrest tracked down and killed the rogue animal.[124] On another occasion, he threatened to kill a neighbor's ox that was destroying the family's crops. When it continued to maraud, Forrest followed through and shot the animal. When the neighbor threatened to kill Forrest in return, Forrest calmly reloaded his flintlock and fired at him. Desiring merely to scare the man, Forrest's shot went through his clothes without harm. That neighbor never bothered the Forrests again.[125]

In the years following his father's death, Forrest labored diligently to support his family, working the fields all day and making buckskin clothing for his brothers at night.[126] This hard work eventually brought his family to comfortable circumstances.

In the fall of 1842 his uncle, Jonathan Forrest, offered him a partnership in his livery stable and livestock business in Hernando, Mississippi, which was duly accepted. Three years later, his uncle was confronted by four men with nefarious aims. Recognizing the unfairness of the fight, Forrest intervened; and the men shot at him. Jonathan Forrest was ultimately shot

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[121] Brian Steel Wills, *A Battle from the Start, The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 9.
[122] Wills, *A Battle from the Start*, 17.
[123] Mathes, *General Forrest*, 4.
[124] Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 8.
[125] Mathes, *General Forrest*, 7.
[126] Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 13.

during the melee and soon died of his wounds. Although slightly wounded himself, Forrest fought off the attackers and tracked down one who had escaped. An eyewitness account of the man's capture quoted Forrest as saying: "You deserve death at my hands, but I am too brave a man to murder one so completely in my power; I give you life." Forrest then turned the man over to the authorities.[127]

Forrest possessed a strong sense of righteousness that shaped much of his life and influenced his later leadership style. He was highly regarded for his gallantry toward women, respect for justice, and abstinence from both tobacco and alcohol. Contrary to popular accounts, Forrest was also noted to have been kind to the slaves in his care. Of this, Robert Henry wrote: "Testimony is unanimous that besides the ordinary good business practice of looking after the physical well-being of the slaves he bought and sold, he went to lengths to keep families together, and even to reunite them, so as to avoid the painful separations that were too common in the days of the rapid expansion of cotton planting in the lower Mississippi River region; and that frequently he was besought by slaves to purchase them, because of his reputation for kindness and fair treatment ."[128]

In 1845 Forrest met and married Mary Ann Montgomery. In September of the following year, their son William Montgomery Forrest was born. The birth of his son had a profound influence on the senior Forrest. In the closing year of the war, he wrote a letter to the younger Forrest wishing him to follow the virtues of his mother and avoid the violent life he had led.[129]

In 1851 the family moved to Memphis, Tennessee. There Forrest dealt in cotton, plantations, livestock, real estate, and slaves. Through common-sense and good judgment he became a wealthy man by age forty. When the Civil War began his net worth was estimated to be well over one million dollars. His self-made wealth and strong sense of righteousness made him highly respected in Memphis. He was ultimately elected to serve several terms on the city council. Of this service, Memphis Mayor R.D. Baugh noted: "While alderman, General Forrest never offered a resolution to the board on any subject or to carry out any measure, no matter how unpopular it might be at first, that he did not stick to it and work at it until he carried it triumphantly through."[130]

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[127] Eyewitness account of F.W. Chamberlain taken in June 1900, as quoted in Mathes, *General Forrest*, 12.
[128] Robert Selph Henry, *First With the Most: Forrest*, New York: Smithmark Publishers,Inc, 1994), 26.
[129] Wills, *A Battle From the Start*, 312-313.
[130] Mathes, *General Forrest*, 19.

By age forty, Forrest had thus become a man held in high regard. His early life influenced his determination and sense of fairness. While he received only a limited education his natural intellect brought him success. These traits no doubt influenced the leadership attributes that would bring him later renown as the South's greatest cavalryman.

That Devil Forrest

After Tennessee seceded from the Union in early June 1861, Forrest enlisted in the ranks as a private. "In age, in appearance, in his air of successful management of affairs, the new trooper in Captain Josiah White's company of Tennessee Mounted Rangers stood out from the general run of eager youth crowding to enlist in the Confederate cause."[131] Older and more accomplished than his young contemporaries, he was motivated to join the cause less by a radicalized ideology of states' rights or pro-slavery sentiments than by a somber support for his homeland. He later noted in an interview published by the New York Times, "I went into the war because my vote had been unable to preserve the peace."[132]

Forrest possessed a stark, black-and-white view of life, coupled with firmly held convictions and a volatile temperament. These qualities influenced both his view of war and his dealings with fellow officers. While he readily accepted orders and was often required to move significant distances to accomplish assigned missions, he was often at odds with his superiors. He was particularly unsympathetic toward General Braxton Bragg. Henry included an account of Forrest's rage against Bragg following Bragg's order for Forrest to transfer his men to the command of Major General Joseph Wheeler:

> …You robbed me of my command in Kentucky…men whom I armed and equipped from the enemies of our country…You drove me into West Tennessee in the winter of 1862, with a second brigade I had organized, with improper arms and without sufficient ammunition…in spite of all this I returned well equipped by captures…and now this second brigade, organized and equipped without thanks to you or the government…you have taken from me. I have stood your meanness as long as I intend to. You have played the part of a damned scoundrel, and if you were any part of a man I would slap your jaws and force you to resent it. You may as well not issue any orders to me, for I will not obey them, and I will hold you personally responsible for any further indignities you endeavor to

[131] Henry, *First With the Most*, 13.
[132] Henry, *First With the Most*, 13.

> inflict upon me…if you ever again try to interfere with me or cross my path it will be at the peril of your life.[133]

This tirade exemplifies his volatile temperament. While it illustrates his dedication to the cause and his men, it also runs contrary to the constructive senior-subordinate relationships so necessary in war.

Much of the frustration he harbored against his superiors was due to their indecisiveness. Such aggravation probably stemmed from his own ability to make quick decisions. A Union officer described this ability during a meeting under truce: "I could not but observe the quickness of apprehension and decision displayed by Forrest in seizing the entire thought intended to be conveyed from the introductory expressions. To think quickly and concretely, and to decide likewise, seemed to be his mental habit. There was about his talk and manner a certain soldierly simplicity and engaging frankness, and I was frequently lost in real admiration."[134] Forrest's ability to recognize the essence of a situation rapidly helps explain how he was able to adapt quickly to the complexities of the battlefield.

Although uneducated and untrained in martial matters, Forrest was clearly recognized for his leadership potential. On 10 July 1861 Tennessee Governor Isham G. Harris, knowing Forrest to be a man of means and ability, commissioned him to raise a battalion of mounted rangers. Having served as a private for less than a month, Forrest soon recruited and equipped his battalion. "Moving on to Louisville [Kentucky], he first clandestinely bought with his own money some 500 Colt navy pistols and 100 saddles and similar cavalry gear."[135] Upon returning to Memphis with his purchases and his gathering of eight companies of cavalry, he was elected the battalion's lieutenant colonel. He was promoted to colonel on 16 March 1862, and by July 1862 he was a brigadier general. Forrest was promoted to major general on 4 December 1863 and to lieutenant general on 28 February 1865. When he surrendered at Gainesville, Alabama, on 9 May 1865, his was the last Confederate command under arms east of the Mississippi River.[136]

Forrest imposed strict discipline on his men. To dissuade desertion, Forrest once had nineteen deserters marched through camp and announced they would be executed. "On the day

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[133] Henry, *First With the Most*, 199.
[134] Lewis M. Hosea, *Some Side Lights on the War For the Union: Paper Read Before the Ohio Commandery of the Loyal Legion*, (Cleveland, OH, 1912), 12.
[135] Jack Hurst, *Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1993), 73.
[136] Henry, *First With the Most Forrest*, 209.

of execution, Forrest assembled his command in a field. [Colonel Tyree] Bell's brigade, to which the deserters had belonged, formed three sides of a square facing the condemned men, who were sitting on their coffins in front of their freshly dug graves. With the final aspects of the ceremony complete and the men blindfolded, the firing squads stepped up to carry out the sentence. All that remained was the command to 'fire!' Then one of Forrest's staff officers rode up with a reprieve, to which the command responded with a cheer."[137] Although unorthodox, the threatened punishment, remanded at the last minute, had its effect; and desertions in Forrest's command were significantly reduced.

On a different occasion, men intentionally violated Forrest's General Order 99, which, among other things, sought to preserve ammunition and the quality of the command's horses by not discharging weapons in camp and not galloping horses unnecessarily. As men blatantly set up a quarter-mile course in front of Forrest's headquarters and began racing, he joined in the entertainment. When the men ended the festivities and began moving back toward camp, Forrest had them arrested and court-martialed. While this punishment was not as severe as that of the previous example, it reinforced his authority within his command. His son William was notably among the men punished.[138]

Forrest's daring and creativity were particularly evident in his operation along the Tennessee River near Johnsonville in the fall of 1864. Grasping the importance of his mission to disrupt Union supply lines, he scrutinized the rail line that connected Sherman's army in Georgia with its supply depot in Louisville, Kentucky.[139] As John Arquilla described the situation, "There along the way he would prove that the rail and telegraph technologies that so empowered Union forces also imperiled them. For a modern industrial army is highly dependent on secure logistics and communications."[140] Despite his lack of formal military training, Forrest instinctively grasped the vulnerability of Sherman's army to disruption of its supply.

Forrest decided initially to interdict the flow of supplies to Johnsonville from the north, rather than attacking the depot directly. He thus ordered General Abraham Buford to establish an ambush line, anchored by artillery pieces, along the Tennessee River in order to destroy,

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[137] Wills, *A Battle From the Start*, 157-158.
[138] Wills, *A Battle From the Start*, 304.
[139] Edward G. Longacre, *Mounted Raids of the Civil War*, (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 287.
[140] John Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits: How Masters of Irregular Warfare Have Shaped Our World*, (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 102-103.

capture, or impede cargo vessels bound for the depot. By Forrest's arrival on 31 October 1864, Buford had already disabled and captured two Union gunboats and two supply vessels. Forrest's adaptability was again evident in his decision use the Union gunboats against the depot. In a combined sea-land operation, Forrest's cavalry moved toward the depot by road, while his newly acquired gunboats made their way upriver. Although one gunboat was forced out of action and the other destroyed, they provided Forrest the cover to position his men close to the Johnsonville depot.

On the afternoon of 4 November, Forrest's artillery shelled the depot, whereupon a Union officer directed that all undamaged ships be burned.[141] Forrest's improvised use of the captured Union gunboats thus ensured the destruction of the depot without having to attack it directly. Between 75,000 and 120,000 tons of Union supplies were destroyed.[142] Forrest's effective improvisation demonstrates his ability to adapt to situations and employ limited resources with significant effect.

Forrest's understanding of the Union's dependence on supplies guided his efforts throughout the war. Raiding was his favorite mission, and he became a continuous nuisance to the Union forces. "He demonstrated, for the first time in modern war, that whatever new power industrial advances conveyed to militaries, they also opened a host of new vulnerabilities. That should be seen as the insight that has informed insurgents, commandos, and terrorists ever since. Whatever his personal flaws, Forrest was a quintessential master of irregular warfare. "[143] Forrest's ability to attack key Union nodes forced the Union to dedicate significant forces in their defense, thus thinning the Union line for the Confederate army.

Forrest was also a master of deception. In October 1863 Forrest convinced Confederate President Jefferson Davis to release his force from under Bragg's Army of the Tennessee. Freed to operate independently in western Tennessee and northern Mississippi, Forrest began making attacks against Union bases. On one raid into western Tennessee, Forrest's force ran into heavy Union resistance. In typical fashion he was able to outpace the pursuing Union forces and used his knowledge of the locality to stymie their efforts. As John Tierney noted, "he would have been destroyed had he not feinted an attack in one direction, only to catch the Union off guard and to escape, by night, in another direction. Forrest had outfoxed the regular Union army and

[141] Longacre, *Mounted Raids of the Civil War*, 300-301.
[142] Longacre, *Mounted Raids of the Civil War*, 300-301.
[143] Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits*, 111.

made it back safely to Mississippi."[144] His ability to strike rapidly and evade pursuers with speed and deception enabled Forrest to elude capture throughout the war.

Forrest also understood the importance of mobility and used it effectively throughout the war. He grasped the fact that firepower was superior to the sabers traditionally employed by cavalrymen. Lewis Hosea quoted him as saying: "Gin'ral Wilson may pick his men and I'll pick mine. He may take his sabers and I'll take my six-shooters. I don't want narry a saber in my command — haven't got one."[145] Forrest effectively integrated mounted cavalry with infantry to attack simultaneously from multiple directions. "Forrest's other traits included an extremely innovative tactical approach to battle and a farseeing strategic sensibility. In an age when his colleagues — and most of his Union adversaries — sought victory through the shock of frontal attack, Forrest pioneered a concept of operations based on mounting simultaneous attacks on flanks and rear — what we today call swarm tactics."[146]

The darkest moment in Forrest's military career took place in April 1864 at Fort Pillow, Tennessee. The fort was garrisoned by a mixture of Tennessee Unionists and freed slaves, estimated at approximately 580 Union troops.[147] Despite having two horses shot from under him, Forrest reconnoitered the fort. He noted the makeup of the defenses and terrain and arrayed his forces in prominent positions that provided ample protection to his attackers. Forrest then attempted to convince the garrison to surrender because it was outnumbered and he possessed the dominant position. Unconvinced that Forrest was actually who he said he was, the Union troops refused. Forrest subsequently issued the order to attack.

The melee that ensued resulted in the deaths of numerous defenders who were in the process of surrendering or running away. While Forrest is reported to have stopped the killing, conflicting accounts make it difficult to discern the actual course of events. Although the numbers of dead Unionists and freed slaves were roughly equal, accounts in the north portrayed the massacre as premeditated against the slaves. While much of Forrest's negative reputation is derived from the events at Fort Pillow, Brian Wills noted that Forrest did not lead the charge, as would be expected if he had indeed planned to massacre the garrison. "It is important to note that had Forrest planned to massacre the garrison, he most assuredly would have led the charge

[144] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 72.
[145] Hosea, *Some Side Lights on the War For the Union*, 13.
[146] Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits*, 104.
[147] Wills, *A Battle From the Start*, 180.

himself and waded whole-heartedly into the bloodletting without hesitation."[148] Regardless of whether he had derived a plan to massacre the garrison at Fort Pillow or not, as commander, Forrest was responsible for the actions of his troopers.

As the war's outcome became evident, many expected Forrest to adopt a policy of unrestricted guerrilla warfare. After giving the subject due consideration, he recognized the folly of this policy. Within a month of Lee's surrender, he disbanded his force. With no elaborate ceremony, the last Confederate command in the west was dissolved.

Summary

Forrest's prowess on the field is unquestionable. A man of little education, he was an untutored military genius who brought significant trouble to the Union forces operating in the west.[149] His success was recognized by friend and foe alike. His natural leadership ability is evident in the fact that was the only man on either side to start the war as a private and end as a general. Although a conventional cavalryman, he took to partisan operations early in the war. While he was highly effective in this capacity, he was equally effective in the conventional role. This ability to transition between these roles provides important insight for the modern military leader.

Forrest recognized the vulnerabilities of the extended Union lines of communication and exploited them with great success. "He demonstrated, for the first time in modern war, that whatever new power industrial advances conveyed to militaries, they also opened a host of new vulnerabilities."[150] By raiding deep into the enemy's rear against rail, telecommunications, and supply points, Forrest was able to tie up significant Union forces. His propensity for mobile warfare enabled him to make rapid attacks and just as quickly disappear.

Forrest was a front-line leader who inspired his men to perform significant feats. His success was recognized on both sides and Ulysses S. Grant judged Forrest "the ablest cavalry general in the South."[151] He displayed a mastery of the modern principles of mobility, surprise,

[148] Wills, *A Battle From the Start*, 185.
[149] Jac Weller, "Nathan Bedford Forrest: An Analysis of Untutored Military Genius", *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, September 1959, 231-251.
[150] Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits*, 111.
[151] Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits*, 103.

unity of effort, and economy of force more than a half-century before J.F.C. Fuller articulated them in *The Foundations of the Science of War*.[152]

The Gray Ghost

John Singleton Mosby was an unlikely insurgent leader who became perhaps the most famous irregular fighter of the war. An ardent Union supporter, he actively supported and voted for Northern Democrat Stephen Douglas in the 1860 presidential election.[153] He had even told his friend J. Austin Sperry of the *Bristol News* that: "I shall fight for the Union, Sir,—for the Union, of course, and you?"[154] Only when Virginia appeared on the brink of secession did he remain loyal to his home state and join the Confederates. Although possessing few indicators of military prowess, Mosby's rural upbringing and keen intellect eventually made him one of the most significant insurgent leaders of the war.

Mosby's Early Life

John Singleton Mosby was born in Edgemont, Virginia on 6 December 1833. He was one of nine children, two sons and seven daughters, born to Alfred and Virginia McLaurine Mosby. Mosby was described as "weak, frail, and sickly in childhood and youth."[155] It was often said that his poor health would never allow him to survive to manhood. He later reveled in this inaccuracy when he wrote in his memoirs, "But the prophets were wrong, for I have outlived nearly all the contemporaries of my youth."[156]

Although known for his tenacity and competitiveness, he held no interest in athletics. An avid hunter and accomplished outdoorsman, he enjoyed the wilderness and spent much time in the woods of his father's farm. Mosby also possessed an outgoing character. "He was unselfish, gentle, and kind, with a sprightly personality that gave him the ability to enter a room and light it

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[152] In his work, Fuller posited that there were 8 principles of war. They were Maintenance of the Objective, Offensive Action, Surprise, Concentration, Economy of Force, Security, Mobility, and Co-operation. Of these Forrest demonstrated Offensive Action, Surprise, Mobility, and Co-operation. J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1926), 15.*

[153] John Singleton Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, edited by Charles Wells Russell, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1959), 12.

[154] James A. Ramage, *Gray Ghost: The Life of Col. John Singleton Mosby*, (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 31.

[155] Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 11.

[156] Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, 5.

up with his buoyant wit and invigorating charm."[157] These traits influenced his later insurgent leadership.

His kindness also carried over to the issue of slavery. In his memoirs Mosby stated: "My father was a slaveholder, and I still cherish a strong affection for the slaves who nursed me and played with me in my childhood"[158] This early affection made him, like many other southerners, a supporter of abolition. Thus, Mosby's motivation for going to war rested almost solely in his loyalty to Virginia; it was not based on pro-slavery ideology a hatred of the Union.

When Mosby was seven years old, his family moved to a farm near Charlottesville, Virginia, where Thomas Jefferson's Monticello could be viewed from the front lawn.[159] He learned to read in a nearby log schoolhouse and at age ten began to attend school in Charlottesville. During his early schooling, Mosby was often bullied by his classmates. This probably inspired his later tenacity as a fighter and his unwillingness to back down from a challenge. His early education included instruction in Greek and Latin classics, as well as mathematics. He noted in his memoirs that the first book he read outside of school was *The Life of Marion* and that he reveled in the exploits of the man with whom he would one day be compared.[160]

At the age of sixteen, Mosby began attending the University of Virginia. He had an aptitude for learning that developed at an early age. He wrote: "My habits of study were never regular, but I always had a literary taste. While I fairly recited Tacitus and Thucydides as a task, I read with delight Irving's stories of the Moors in Granada."[161] In college he excelled in literature and the languages, while struggling with mathematics.

While attending the University of Virginia, Mosby was involved in an incident that indelibly shaped his future. In March of 1853 he was told that George Turpin, a local bully, had spoken disparaging remarks about him. Mosby replied with a letter requesting George to explain the matter. Apparently angered that such a frail college student would question him, Turpin proceeded to the boarding house where Mosby lived. As Turpin ascended the stairs of the

[157] Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 18.
[158] Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, 5.
[159] Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 17.
[160] Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, 4.
[161] Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, 6.

boarding house, Mosby leveled a gun and shot him in the face.[162] Although Turpin did not die from his wound, Mosby was subsequently arrested and jailed for the shooting.

Charged with malicious shooting and unlawful shooting, Mosby was tried and ultimately convicted of unlawful shooting. He was sentenced to one year in jail and fined five-hundred dollars. After nearly seven months, Virginia Governor Joseph Johnson pardoned him and the fine was rescinded. During his incarceration, Mosby passed the time studying a legal book he borrowed from his prosecutor, William Robertson. After his pardon he continued his legal training in Robertson's law offices, eventually passing the bar on 4 September 1855.[163]

Mosby then moved to Howardsville, Virginia and established his law practice. Soon thereafter he met Mariah L. Pauline Clarke, and they were married in December 1856. The couple eventually had two children, a daughter May Virginia, born in March 1858 and son Beverly C., born in October 1860. A devoted family man, Mosby was often noted for the agony he felt in leaving his family during his wartime service.[164]

The Confederate Army

Mosby was not the prototypical soldier. "Few who saw him or knew him could have anticipated his future military success and renown."[165] James Williamson, a member of Mosby's command, noted his impression upon meeting Mosby for the first time: "I could scarcely believe that the slight frame before me could be that of the man who had won such military fame by his daring."[166] Although weighing less than one-hundred and thirty pounds, what Mosby lacked in physical stature he more than made up for with his intellect and aggressiveness.[167]

At the outbreak of the war, Mosby was practicing law in Bristol on the Virginia-Tennessee border. Although he did not support secession, he maintained his loyalty to his home state and reluctantly joined the Virginia militia as a private in early 1861. When Virginia seceded from the Union in April, his company, the Washington Mounted Rifles, marched eastward to join the growing Confederate army.[168]

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[162] Jeffry D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers: The True Adventures of the Most Famous Command of the Civil War*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 26.
[163] Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 28.
[164] Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, 28.
[165] Wert, *Mosby's Rangers*, 25.
[166] James Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers: A Record of the Operations of the Forty-Third Battalion Virginia Cavalry*, (New York: Ralph B. Kenyon Publishers, 1896), 15.
[167] Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 1.

Mosby's company, under the command of William E. "Grumble" Jones, was reorganized as Company D, 1st Virginia Cavalry, under Colonel James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart. During the summer of 1861, Mosby participated in the opening engagement of the war at the first Battle of Bull Run. During this engagement, Captain Jones's company stood in the reserve of Colonel Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's Brigade. Following a failed attack on Jackson, the Union forces retreated and were pursued by Jones's cavalry. This was Mosby's first experience of the war.

Recognizing Mosby's education and talents, Captain Jones promoted him to adjutant after the battle. In this capacity he became acquainted with his later mentor General Stuart. Also recognizing Mosby's ability, Stuart sent Mosby on several scouting missions. Minor successes resulted in Mosby becoming one of Stuart's trusted scouts. These scouting forays provided valuable intelligence for Lee's army. On one occasion, Stuart sent Mosby on a mission to determine if the Union commander George McClellan was moving against General Joseph Johnston's force or if he was making a feint. "Eluding notice Mosby determined the Union force a feint and that McClellan's main force was heading to the [Virginia] peninsula.[169] This information gave General Lee the ability to position his forces between McClellan and Richmond, eventually resulting in a Confederate victory during the Peninsula Campaign.

In that campaign, Mosby continued his scouting duties. On one such mission, while flanking the Union's main force, Mosby was captured. Believing him to be a courier, the Union authorities sent him to Old Capitol Prison in Washington. There he convinced the Confederate prisoner exchange commission that he had urgent information for Lee. He was released the following day in exchange for a Union lieutenant, allowing him to report his findings to General Stuart, who duly passed them on to Lee. Once again, the information Mosby provided ensured the Confederate army was positioned to oppose the Union advance with Lee attacking the Union force at the Second Battle of Bull Run.

Partisan Ranger

Mosby's quest for knowledge and keen insight gained him significant military knowledge during the first year of the war. James Ramage noted of his experience under Captain Jones: "Mosby could not have selected a better mentor for his introduction into military life. He taught

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[168] Wert, *Mosby's Rangers*, 28.
[169] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 77.

Mosby the importance of vigilance, showed him how to enforce discipline fairly, and by example demonstrated that the men appreciated efficient administration."[170] This early instruction in military leadership served Mosby well in his later command.

At the end of 1862, General Stuart recognized the significance of Mosby's activities and decided to make him a partisan. Stuart believed the damage Mosby and his small detachment inflicted on the larger Federal forces would be worth the risk of losing the elite men he assigned to Mosby's command.[171] Convincing Lee of the value, Stuart sent Mosby off with fifteen men on 24 January 1863 to begin semi-autonomous raiding operations.

In April, Lee authorized Mosby to recruit additional troops for his mission. Mosby judiciously applied his knowledge of the local populace to select men fitted for that kind of service.[172] He sought men who possessed unique skills or those who possessed an intimate knowledge of the Union forces. "A very important aid to Mosby in his successful attacks and surprises was the selection of skillful and intelligent guides and scouts — men familiar with the section of country in which he operated."[173] As part of his selection process, Mosby consciously avoided Confederate deserters. While he did admit Union deserters based on their particular knowledge of the adversary, he believed Confederate deserters to be – "an evil more potent than the enemy."[174] Over time, Mosby's force fielded more than 2,000 rangers, but he never had more than 300 men under arms at one time.[175] Although roughly battalion strength, he rarely conducted operations of this scale. His preference was to operate in ten-to-twenty-man detachments, and he effectively used decentralized command through several trusted junior officers.

These small forces were quite capable of operating undetected on the enemy's flanks. Mosby's use of mobility and firepower enabled his men to attack large Union formations boldly and fade quickly back into the cover of the local terrain. Like Forrest, Mosby disliked the traditional cavalry saber and preferred the use of revolvers. "But the only real use I ever heard of their [sabers] being put to was to hold a piece of meat over a fire for frying. I dragged one through the first year of the war, but when I became a commander, I discarded it. The sabre and

[170] Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 34.
[171] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 79.
[172] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 80.
[173] Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers*, 48.
[174] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 81.
[175] Zedric and Dilley, *Elite Warriors*, 102.

lance may have been very good weapons in the days of chivalry, and my suspicion is that the combats of the hero of Cervantes were more realistic and not such burlesques as they are supposed to be. But certainly the sabre is of no use against gunpowder."[176] His men armed themselves with as many revolvers as they could carry. This gave them close-in firepower, largely reducing the effectiveness of the Union soldiers' rifles.

The rural, mountainous terrain in which Mosby operated was well suited to irregular operations. His force utilized its knowledge of the terrain to circumvent Union strong points and attack when and where the enemy least expected. More importantly, such knowledge allowed him to attack at night when the Union forces were poorly prepared to resist.

Mosby was a charismatic leader who inspired his men to daring feats that emulated his own aggressiveness. He was exceedingly aggressive and daring. As Virgil Jones noted, "Mosby believed that, by assuming the aggressive [*sic*], he could compel his adversary to guard against a hundred points while he waited to attack any he chose."[177] Mosby's greatest quality was his ability to communicate his vision to his men. He trained his men in techniques that were ahead of his time. Two of his observations about partisan warfare describe the essence of his operations: "A small force moving with celerity and threatening many points on a line can neutralize a hundred times its own number," and "The military value of a partisan's work is not measured by the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number he keeps watching."[178]

For the two years from March 1863 to April 1865, Mosby created what became known as "Mosby's Confederacy." His lack of military experience was overshadowed by the effectiveness of his operations. Understanding that his actions would ultimately force Union forces onto the defensive demonstrates his comprehension of his role in the larger context of the war. "The aim of Mosby's Rangers therefore became rendering any movement in their area so dangerous that Union troops would be able to pass through safely only in large numbers."[179] Mosby's operations made it exceptionally difficult for Union army to operate in the Shenandoah Valley. A Union soldier noted, "The gallant Chevalier of Southern Maidens, Mosby, continues to dash out on sutlers, where he can find them unguarded or broken down, and he generally takes

[176] Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, 30.
[177] Virgil Carrington Jones, *Ranger Mosby*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), ix.
[178] Zedric and Dilley, *Elite Warriors*, 102.
[179] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 53.

them without loss of a man."[180] Not only did his raids sever Union supply lines, they eventually occupied thousands of Union soldiers dedicated to keeping these lines open.

Possibly the most famous of Mosby's raids took place on the night of 8 March 1863. In his usual fashion, Mosby spent weeks gathering intelligence on the Union forces stationed in the area around Fairfax Courthouse, Virginia.[181] Noting the weaknesses in the Federal lines, and employing their knowledge of the area, Mosby and a small band of men slipped through the pickets undetected and entered the town. While his men captured and divided horses and Union soldiers, Mosby made his way into a house where Brigadier General Edwin Stoughton was staying. Waking the General from his bed, Mosby stated, "General, did you ever hear of Mosby?" When Stoughton replied, "Yes, have you caught him?" Mosby responded simply, "He has caught you."[182]

Stoughton's capture brought Mosby great acclaim in the south. After only weeks in the field as a partisan, he had demonstrated the significant effect that small raiding forces could have. Stuart commended Mosby for the raid and subsequently promoted him to major. "His late brilliant exploit — the capture of Brigadier-General Stoughton, U.S.A., 2 captains, 20 other prisoners, together with their arms, equipments and 58 horses — justifies his recognition in General orders. This feat, almost unparalleled in the war, was performed in the midst of the enemy's troops at Fairfax Court House, without loss or injury."[183] The success of the operation is also evident in the fact that no lives were lost by either side.

Another operation that brought Mosby's command great fame in the south became known as the Greenback Raid. Not unlike many of his raids against Union rail lines, Mosby's patrols found a weakness in the defenses along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. On the morning of 14 October 1864, Mosby and his men stopped a passenger train and began offloading its cargo. Within the lot of captured items was a satchel and lock box belonging to two Federal paymasters. These items contained Federal currency totaling $173,000. [184] While Union troops considered these activities criminal, the raid was highly lauded in the south. Either out of respect

[180] Sutlers were merchants who sold perishable goods to armies in the field. "Letters from a soldier of the 122nd New York" in the *Syracuse Daily Journal*, Aug. 10, 1863 as quoted in McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 738.
[181] Zedric and Dilley, *Elite Warriors*, 103.
[182] Jones, *Ranger Mosby*, 94.
[183] J.E.B. Stuart commendation of Mosby in promotion General Order to major following capture of Brigadier General Stoughton as reprinted in Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers*, 47.
[184] Zedric and Dilley, *Elite Warriors*, 105.

for his enemy or his own propriety, Mosby subsequently forwarded a note to Union authorities allaying suspicion that the paymasters had stolen the money.

Mosby's relationship with the local population was critical to his success. Understanding this, Mosby did what he could to protect and support these people. He was often able to provide them subsistence from captured Union stores. He was also seen as being a sympathetic protector of all civilians in the region, whatever their loyalties. He forbade his men from attacking or looting civilian Unionists.[185] He also treated captured Union prisoners fairly, though he was wont to shoot prisoners who were found to have burned the barn of southerners.[186]

His support among the population led to Union reprisals against them. As Federal efforts to capture Mosby failed, such reprisals became intensified. In August 1864 Grant authorized General Phillip Sheridan to make the Shenandoah Valley uninhabitable. Grant told Sheridan to destroy all crops, livestock, and forage in Loudoun County. Grant also instructed Sheridan to arrest any man under the age of fifty capable of carrying a rifle and hang any identified as a guerrilla.[187] This order brought devastation to the area, and a number of Mosby's men were hanged as a result. In one instance in 1864, "while Mosby was recovering from a wound, Capt. Sam Chapman led a detachment of the Rangers in an attack on a Union Army wagon train just south of Front Royal, Virginia. In the ensuing fight six of Chapman's men were captured; later that same day they were brutally executed. When Mosby returned to duty, he took retaliation by ordering the execution of a like number of Union prisoners."[188] Mosby's act of revenge subsequently damaged his effectiveness by intensifying Union reprisals.

Although reprisals generally produce few positive effects, Sheridan's devastation severely undermined Mosby's support. John Delany, who lived in the Shenandoah, described local sentiments in a letter to his son: "These [guerrilla] attacks generally result in them [Union soldiers] making their reprisals on us, it would be better for us if they [Mosby's men] staid [*sic*] away."[189] As the war wore on, support for secession declined and Union reprisals hastened the southern discontent. In the end, Mosby's inability to protect the southerners from federal

[185] Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 75.
[186] Anthony James Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 55.
[187] Mountcastle, *Punitive War*, 132.
[188] John Singleton Mosby, *Take Sides With the Truth: The Postwar letters of John Singleton Mosby to Samuel F. Chapman*, edited by Peter A. Brown, (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2007), 37.
[189] Letter from John Delany to Richard Delany reprinted in Margaret A. Vogtsbergen, *The Delany's of Welbourne: A Family in Mosby's Confederacy*, (Berryville, VA: Rockbridge Publishing, 1995), 79, as quoted in Mountcastle, *Punitive War*, 120.

destruction caused many civilians to turn away from him and his men — eventually leaving them without sufficient provisions.[190] Sheridan's devastation of the Shenandoah Valley illustrates that the "drain-the-swamp" approach to counterinsurgency can be effective if applied with sufficient ruthlessness.

One of Mosby's most important attributes was his loyalty to both Stuart and Lee. While essentially independent in his activities, Mosby was active in providing intelligence to the Confederate army and was often called upon to provide a screen for the larger conventional force. Aside from the sanctioned privateering activities that sustained Mosby's command, he was essentially an extension of Stuart's cavalry. James Williamson accurately described the nature of Mosby's command: "Mosby was acting under direct orders of General Stuart up to the time of his death, and then under General Lee, and was independent only in the sense that both Lee and Stuart had such confidence in him that they permitted him to act on his own discretion."[191] This semi-autonomy not only indicates the trust Mosby gained from his superiors, but also the effectiveness of irregulars when properly integrated into the larger context.

Summary

Mosby remained in the field for several weeks following Lee's surrender. Maintaining his loyalty to Lee and recognizing the futility of continued operations he disbanded his command on 21 April 1865. Not wanting to tarnish his men's accomplishments, Mosby alone bore the burden of surrender when he turned himself over to General Winfield Hancock the following day.

Mosby returned to civilian life and became engaged in the slow process of reunification. His exploits and talents were recognized by leaders on both sides, and he soon formed a lasting friendship with Grant. His pre-war sentiments for maintaining the Union enabled Mosby to harbor no ill-will towards his former enemies, and he served the United States as both U.S. Consul General to Hong Kong from 1878 to 1885 and later as an Assistant U.S. Attorney from 1904 to 1910. On 30 May 1916, Mosby died at the age of 82.

[190] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 55.
[191] Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers*, 23.

Mosby epitomized the effectiveness of insurgent fighters in his support of the Confederate army. Grant summarized this success as follows: "There were probably but few men in the South who could have commanded successfully a separate detachment in the rear of an opposing army, and so near the border hostilities, as long as he [Mosby] did without losing his entire command."[192]

Although lacking formal military education, Mosby clearly understood his role in the larger context of the Civil War. "In classic guerrilla style, Mosby led his irregular unit as an adjunct of the regular units. With an average force of five hundred men, using mostly pistols and other small arms, he made occupation a hell on earth for Union armies in Virginia."[193] His lightening raids forced the Union army to divert considerable manpower away from the larger fight to secure its lines of communication. This diversion of manpower thinned the Union lines, possibly allowing Lee's army to remain in the field longer than he could have without Mosby's diversionary operations.

Mosby used his knowledge of the local terrain to operate effectively against his Union foe. His use of fire and maneuver proved difficult for the Union army to counter. His raids both inspired a wavering cause and provided much-needed supplies to his forces and the local population. While the limited scope of his operations did not achieve strategic success, the fact that western Virginia became known as "Mosby's Confederacy" indicates the influence his operations had on the region[194]

Mosby's major shortfalls in an otherwise successful campaign were his reprisals against Union soldiers for the hanging of his men and the resultant loss of his popular support. These lessons remain valuable for the modern military practitioner. Although these shortfalls had little influence in the overall outcome of the war, they remain important to note today. Leaders must ensure their emotions remain checked in accordance with acceptable military standards. Likewise, his loss of popular support reflects the inherent need to maintain security for the local population during an insurgency. But some of that loss of support was probably beyond his control. He was simply unable to resist Sheridan's draconian application of overwhelming force.

[192] Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, 1885-1886, as quoted in Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 72.
[193] Tierney, *Chasing Ghosts*, 54.
[194] Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits*, 102.

Mosby's success and the confidence his superiors placed in him are reflected in his command's remaining intact after the Partisan Ranger Act was repealed in April 1864.[195] Mosby validated the trust that Generals Lee and Jackson placed in his abilities and proved the effectiveness of operations in support of conventional forces. Were it not for Mosby's ability to create havoc for the Union forces in the Shenandoah Valley, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia would in all likelihood have been driven from the field well before April 1865.

Chapter Conclusions

The Confederacy failed to gain independence from the United States. The lack of solidarity for secession in the south created tremendous contradictions within the Confederacy itself. As Anthony Joes noted, "The Confederacy was not a nation, not a patria, but only a constitutional arrangement, without the legitimacy of age, without the catalyst of a foreign foe, and without the support of a unified population."[196] A relatively small population, coupled with a limited industrial base, precluded the south from prevailing against the Union's war of attrition. Although the South possessed leaders of great talent, victory was in all likelihood unattainable.

Nathan Bedford Forrest's duality of purpose is significant in understanding insurgent fighting during the Civil War. His ability to transition between conventional and irregular operations demonstrates his adaptability. Without benefit of a military education, his natural intellect enabled him to develop operations that effectively employed mobility, firepower, and surprise against a numerically superior enemy. His understanding of the context of the larger conflict facilitated his understanding of the vulnerability of Union lines of communication, which he exploited with great success. Forrest's strict discipline and trust of his subordinate leaders facilitated effective decentralized operations. While successful, Forrest demonstrated negative qualities as well. He possessed an independent and fiery temperament that often made him a difficult subordinate. The mutual lack of trust between Forrest and Bragg undermined the senior-subordinate relationship essential to decentralized operations. Most notably, the loss of discipline at Fort Pillow resulted in the massacre that inevitably overshadowed his otherwise successful military career.

[195] Zedric and Dilley, *Elite Warriors*, 86.
[196] Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 85.

Mosby was an unlikely warrior who possessed a keen intellect. He effectively employed surprise and mobility in his operations. He provided General Lee with critical information that aided his campaign in Virginia. Mosby's ability to clearly convey his intent facilitated his decentralized operations. Mosby understood his role as an adjunct to the conventional force and maintained an effective relationship with his superiors. The relative autonomy Stuart and Lee provided Mosby exemplified the high level of trust they had in his abilities. He possessed an adept understanding of the importance the population played in supporting his operations. It was only through overwhelming destruction by a numerically superior force that the Union was able to cut off Mosby's support network. Mosby's contempt for the Union policies of burning farms and hanging suspected insurgents motivated his policy of shooting prisoners that possibly served to increase Union reprisals. The positive and negative leadership examples Mosby demonstrated provide useful insights to modern military leaders.

The American Civil War demonstrated the effectiveness of insurgency when employed in support of conventional forces. Forrest and Mosby were able to adapt their conventional forces to serve in this irregular role, greatly aiding the conventional effort. Their innovative use of mobility and firepower, aided by their knowledge of the local terrain, gave them a decided advantage over their Union adversaries. Their raids against Union lines of communication forced the Union army to dedicate large numbers of soldiers to their defense. Trust in their subordinate leaders and the discipline instilled in their men enabled effective decentralized operations. Both men also demonstrated negative traits that hindered their otherwise successful operations. Mosby's retaliation for the hanging of his men and Forrest's loss of control of his force at Fort Pillow blighted their otherwise successful insurgent campaigns. The examples of both positive and negative traits these men demonstrated are useful insights for the contemporary military leader.

The next chapter seeks to synthesize the insights gained from studying Marion, Sumter, Forrest, and Mosby and see how these lessons might apply to contemporary warfare.

Chapter 3

Conclusions and Implications

The inability of the army to adapt itself to changed circumstances has heavy consequences.

-Roger Trinquier

In response, our profession must embrace a culture of change and adaptation. We must think differently about how we develop leaders and how we organize, train, and equip our soldiers and units.

-General Martin Dempsey

Insurgencies may be home grown, or they may be actively abetted and supported by external powers. They may be independent of or complementary to conventional fighting. The examples provided here reflect the effectiveness of home-grown insurgencies. They also highlight the value of insurgency in support of the conventional fight. For the military practitioner, understanding the nature of the insurgency is critical to the development of a counter-strategy. This chapter seeks to synthesize the insights gained from the four insurgent leaders examined in this work. By exploring the relationships between events in their lives and their leadership qualities, the author aims to discover insights pertinent to the contemporary military practitioner.

Conclusions

Francis Marion's life in the eighteenth-century Carolina low-country played a significant role in his ability as an insurgent leader. Early on, he learned the value of hard work, loyalty, and independence. His ability to adapt provided him a decided advantage over his enemy. His love of the outdoors gave him knowledge of the terrain that the British outsiders could not replicate. While having only a limited education, Marion was highly intelligent. He was able to apply this intelligence to creating limitless problems for his British adversaries. While his military experience was also limited, Marion possessed the ability to visualize the battlefield from the tactical to the strategic levels. His understanding of the implications of Greene's strategy allowed him to employ his limited force effectively. He understood that insurgent forces could not defeat the British by themselves. But by tying down British forces, gathering intelligence, and raiding British camps, Marion allowed Greene's army to conduct large-scale

battles. Marion also understood that maintaining the support of the populace was critical. As a Carolina native, he knew the people and their needs. This helped gain the support his forces needed to operate in the region. His personal convictions were strongly against the practice of burning the homes and farms of civilians, and he understood that doing so would strengthen their resolve against the Patriot cause. Marion applied this understanding of the population to his activities, assisting Greene in unifying Carolinians against the British occupation. In the end, Marion and his insurgent counterparts allowed General Greene to shift his attention from the security of his lines of communication to the more critical task of fighting the British. Marion's innovative tactics and knowledge of the locale gave him a decided advantage over the British and forced Lord Cornwallis to dedicate large numbers of his men to countering Marion's raids. Marion's decentralized planning and execution also illustrate the importance of the modern concept of mission command in irregular warfare.

Thomas Sumter's life in rural Virginia and modern-day South Carolina also shaped his leadership of an insurgency. As in Marion's case, rural life was challenging. It necessitated hard work, innovation, and flexibility. Sumter's lack of education did not limit his ambitions, and he rarely failed to achieve his goals. His militia experience helped shape his leadership style. Although not as adept as Marion in conceptualizing the larger effort, he possessed uncanny tactical ability. Coupled with his knowledge of the terrain, Sumter was able to oppose British operations effectively. His ability to strike the enemy forcefully and then quickly disappear kept the British forces on edge. Sumter's front-line leadership and willingness to suffer beside his men gained him respect from his soldiers. Sumter's brashness and indifference to higher authority were, however, at odds with appropriate military conduct. His impetuousness led him to carelessness, and he too often engaged numerically superior forces. His policy of retribution, known as Sumter's Law, degraded the overall campaign. While he showed some signs of humanity, vengeance for the burning of his home motivated his actions. Although politically astute, Sumter was not as strategically adept as either Greene or Marion. His independence and indifference to higher authority made him a difficult subordinate. In sum, Sumter gives contemporary leaders both a positive role model and an important warning.

Nathan Bedford Forrest was clearly successful in battle. Born into a meager existence on the rural frontier, he worked diligently, eventually becoming a successful businessman. Devout in his convictions, he possessed a volatile temperament. Highly intelligent, his limited schooling

had little effect on his ability to lead in combat. Having no previous military experience, he nevertheless possessed a keen strategic insight. Able to discern the importance of lines of communication of an invading army, he made his mark by raiding and creating havoc in the Union rear. Although formally a conventional cavalryman, he was often assigned irregular duties. His ability to operate independently as an insurgent and quickly revert to his role as a conventional cavalryman provides a useful example to the contemporary military practitioner.

Forrest was highly innovative, and his practice of mobile warfare enabled him to make rapid attacks on enemy forces and facilities. His familiarity with the local terrain put his adversaries at a distinct disadvantage. The ever-present fear of attack by Forrest's cavalry inspired fear in the Union army and often allowed him to capture Union soldiers with limited fighting. It also benefitted the Confederate army by occupying large numbers of Union forces in the defense. Conversely, his independent temperament placed him at odds with his superiors, exacerbating the Confederacy's underlying fractures. His inability to control his men at Fort Pillow vilified him to the public; obscuring his otherwise effective leadership qualities. Thus, his leadership provides both promise and pitfalls for contemporary leaders.

John Singleton Mosby was also the product of the rural frontier of nineteenth-century America. Although hailing from better circumstances than the aforementioned men, he possessed many of the same qualities. Highly intellectual, he is the only one of the four to have had a college education and pursued a professional career. While generally possessed of an even temperament, he was a tenacious fighter who never refused a challenge. An avid outdoorsman, he possessed an independent spirit that fed his innovative thinking and decisiveness. Mosby was a highly effective insurgent. He conducted daring raids against significant odds. The small size of his force necessitated economy of effort. His use of surprise, firepower, and mobility more than compensated for his lack of strength. Mosby's small forces were able to provide much-needed intelligence, and the Union effort to thwart his campaign occupied a large number of Union troops. He was also effective in performing missions both independently and in conjunction with the conventional army. He depended on the support of the local population in true guerrilla form, often attacking and hiding among the people. His ultimate inability to secure Confederate civilians as Union depredations grew more severe eventually limited his capacity for continued operations. Mosby's leadership thus demonstrates many positive qualities for today's military practitioner, and few negative ones.

Synthesis

Habits developed early in life were critical to the development of all four men's leadership styles. Possessing no formal military or leadership training, life experiences alone shaped their fighting methods. By the time these men became leaders, they possessed many of the traits that enabled their success in battle.

The rural backgrounds of all four insurgent leaders were significant in shaping their leadership capacity. Rural America in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries required an independent spirit and an ability to adapt to difficult situations. This characteristic clearly contributed to their successful leadership. These traits, coupled with natural intellect, enabled these men to fight successfully without the benefit of professional military training. Rural beginnings also contributed to their love of the outdoors. As later insurgent theorists determined, success comes from the ability of guerrillas to use the vast expanses of wilderness in which to base and conduct their operations. The fact that all four men were from rural backgrounds supports Ernesto "Che" Guevara's assertion that effective guerrillas come from the rural peasantry.[197]

Except for Sumter on several occasions and Forrest at Fort Pillow, the insurgent leaders maintained strict discipline within their ranks. This discipline was instilled early in their lives. While discipline is the basis of all military activities, it is critical to insurgent warfare. The ability of the leaders to control their forces in an unstructured environment is imperative in this form of warfare. The discipline these men instilled in their forces fostered the ability of their subordinates to conduct decentralized operations. Sumter's lack of discipline marginalized his effectiveness as a leader and contributed to the disunion between his command and higher authorities, while Forrest's one conspicuous lack of discipline at Fort Pillow deeply tarnished his reputation and the southern cause.

Formal education was clearly not necessary to the success of the four insurgent leaders. Marion, Sumter, and Forrest received only minimal education. Mosby was the only one to receive a university education or to have previous exposure to historical military works. Based on the period and circumstances in which these men were raised, this was not uncommon.

[197] In describing the ideal guerrilla fighter, Che Guevara posited that: "A peasant, for example, will be much more resistant than a man from the city." Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 3rd edition, (New York: SR Books, 1997), 76.

The fact that none of these men received formal leadership training is also important. Typical of both wars, all four were selected to positions of authority based on their standing within their communities. This indicates that they had previously demonstrated at least a modicum of leadership capacity. Subsequent promotions based on battlefield performance, validates the accuracy of the early impressions.

It is also important to note the age of the four leaders. Three of the four were in their forties at the time of their efforts, Mosby being the only exception. This allowed them to apply significant life experiences to shape their leadership and fighting styles. In short, maturity may not be necessary, but for three out of the four protagonists it helped.

Because both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War were ridden with internal violence, it is important to note the operational circumstances of the four insurgent leaders. All four men led insurgencies that supported a conventional force. The insurgent campaigns of the American Revolution and the Civil War were integrated into and contributed significantly to the conventional effort. While all four of our subjects from time to time conducted independent operations, their overall success lay primarily in the benefits they provided to the larger war effort. Their ability to provide timely intelligence to the conventional forces was critical. Raids and ambushes not only severed supply lines, they also instilled fear in the enemy. These actions also occupied large numbers of soldiers in defending lines of communications, supply bases, and encampments. Additional forces were also dedicated to hunting down the insurgent bands, mostly with limited success.

The ability of all four men to operate with impunity for extended periods was at least in part attributable to their popular support. In accordance with the classic expositions on insurgency, they depended on the populace to support their operations. In this regard, Marion and Mosby were more closely knit to the communities from which they sprang in coastal Carolina and the Shenandoah Valley. This may have been due to the smaller sizes of their force or perhaps to their personal concerns for the public's well-being. Without this support, their success would have been significantly reduced.

While only Mosby's forces truly lived among the people, the others also depended on local populations for valuable intelligence and resources. Sumter's questionable policy of pillaging loyalists lies at odds with modern "popular support" theories. Although these failures

did not directly influence the outcomes of the wars in which they participated, they certainly detracted from positive results.

The insurgent efforts of the four men examined in this study were quite effective when used in support of conventional action. Neither the campaigns nor the wars studied were won by insurgents or regular forces alone. Greene's ability to synchronize all his forces toward a single cause made his protracted war strategy effective against the British. Mosby and Forrest were highly effective at raiding and intelligence gathering, but only as adjuncts to the conventional army. These examples highlight the effectiveness of insurgency when properly used to support a regular force.

The four men understood the need for some degree of centralized planning to ensure effectiveness. But they also trusted their subordinates to execute the operations stemming from this planning over a vast territory. Although all four men led from the front during the most difficult operations, they were also able to articulate their intentions and develop subordinate leaders capable of acting within those intentions in unforeseeable circumstances. This style of operation was noticeably aided by the entire force's intimate knowledge of the ground on which it operated.

Several summary insights emerge from the above observations. Rural life played a role in shaping their abilities as leaders and provided the background helpful for them to effectively employ insurgent tactics. All four men possessed natural leadership ability. Their limited education and military experience bore no negative influence on their efforts, and possibly assisted in the development of their irregular approaches.

Although the American armed forces have struggled with counterinsurgency in recent conflicts, insurgency is not new to the American fighting style. Many of the principles and tactics used by these early insurgents have become standard doctrine. Raids and ambushes, severing lines of communication, and firepower and maneuver are now common principles. The fact that these men employed these ideas without the benefit of military training is testament to their natural ability.

The four men studied here provide several key insights for contemporary leaders. Adaptive, independent minds aided them in developing strategies their adversaries were unable to counter. Their employment of fire and mobility remain fundamental principles of modern warfare. All four men possessed a contextual understanding of their roles and effectively

conducted irregular operations that positively supported conventional operations. Knowledge of the terrain and support of the populace provided them distinct advantages over their enemy. Discipline and trust were critical components of the decentralized operations they conducted. The importance of these qualities is further exemplified by the negative consequences of their failed employment. The loss of popular support reduced the effectiveness of insurgent operations. Occasional loss of discipline undermined their overall leadership effectiveness, and the lack of senior-subordinate trust compounded already fragile relationships. The implications of these qualities for the modern leader are further examined in the following section.

Implications

Military leaders must develop the most effective forces budgets will allow. Underlying cost concerns shape the concept of creating a force to fight major conventional wars. Although not the most likely form of fighting in today's globalized environment, they remain the most dangerous threat to national security. This provides the impetus for maintaining standing armies. It is thus inevitable that the U.S. armed forces will continue to be trained and equipped for major combat operations. But because limited conflicts appear to be highly likely threats in the foreseeable future and because the armed services only possess very limited numbers of their own specialized irregular warriors in the special operations community, this major-war structured force must be capable of adapting to whatever threats emerge. Such capability requires understanding both the nature of the conflict and the opposing threat. A force improperly tailored to the environment can create significant problems, as evident in the post-invasion outbreak of violence in Iraq in 2003. Michael Derderer alluded to Mao's principles when he noted, "each country, war, and situation was different, wrote Mao, and strategies and tactics 'should not be copied mechanically.'"[198] Leaders must be trained to understand the nature of the threat they face, and possess the aptitude to apply the proper force necessary to achieving national objectives.

The lack of a military peer competitor makes the possibility of irregular conflicts more likely. As a limited war will no doubt require ground forces, a conventional force trained and equipped for major conflicts must be capable of adapting their focus to meet the threat. This

[198] John M. Derderer, "Making Bricks Without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaigns and Mao Tse-Tung's Mobile War," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 47, No. 3, (Oct 1983), 118.

requires leaders capable not only of fighting the major war, but also of adapting their force to fight an irregular adversary.

One important similarity among the four insurgent leaders was their rural backgrounds. Rural life creates adaptive and innovate men out of necessity. The uncertainty inherent in early rural America created rugged men who were both physically tough and mentally adaptive. As more of the world's population migrates to populated areas, modern conflicts will no doubt be fought in urban environments. As rural upbringing become less predominant, new ways to instill these values are required. The independent spirit that an outdoorsman possesses will remain important for future leaders, but the independently thinking leader will have to be created through training and education.

As James Kiras observed, "Those conducting irregular warfare ultimately have to be pragmatic about the violence they use, in order to survive, and leaders choose the violence that best suits the local conditions at the time."[199] Leaders must be capable of adapting to multiple situations without the luxury of long train-up cycles. This will frequently require adapting tactics during active operations. The use of horses by Special Forces soldiers in Afghanistan and the ever-evolving counter-improvised explosive device tactics employed in Iraq demonstrate modern applications of adaptability.

To do this, senior leaders must ensure their subordinates are given the requisite level of autonomy to operate in these complex environments. The four insurgent leaders here studied were successful in part because they were provided a level of autonomy in their operations and because they provided similar autonomy to their subordinates. But autonomous action requires that the superior clearly articulate his intent and that the subordinate firmly grasp it. It also requires a high degree of trust between superiors and subordinates. This level of trust must be established in training. It is also essential that junior leaders be allowed to make mistakes during this training. The ability to make and learn from mistakes in training will ultimately make leaders more confident when lives are on the line.

While the methods of warfare have evolved significantly from the American conflicts studied here, many effective leadership traits remain timeless. Adaptability, discipline, and trust are attributes that enhance the natural abilities of young leaders. While some naturally possess

[199] James Kiras, "Irregular Warfare," in David Jordan, James Kiras, et al, *Understanding Modern Warfare*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 51.

these qualities, others do not. This requires establishing a training regimen that fosters the development of these traits in future leaders. The four insurgent leaders examined here provide useful examples of the importance of these traits.

The adaptability of the four American insurgents examined additionally demonstrates the importance of this trait in irregular warfare. As the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated, the ability of insurgents to adapt to counterinsurgent tactics reinforces this reality. Sydney Freedberg, Jr. quoted incoming U.S. Army War College Commandant Major General Tony Cucolo in a recent interview, "The agility you have learned over the last decade is valuable and will be applied, will be *demanded* and applied again, and again, and again. You have to be prepared to reinvent yourself."[200] While the armed forces have historically depended on a rigid, doctrinal process in prosecuting war, the contemporary fight requires a less restrictive approach. Modern leaders must have the ability to adapt their tactics and strategies to the changing circumstances of the contemporary battlefield. Mao noted the importance of adapting strategies to the environment in his statement, "In our employment of troops we need progressive, flexible strategy and tactics, without which we likewise cannot win victory."[201] This imperative remains valid.

Discipline is the primary building block of any military organization. Without discipline, leaders have limited ability to control the actions of their subordinates. In today's information-centric world, a breakdown in discipline can result in substantial harm to on-going operations. This is exemplified by the recent events in Afghanistan where U.S. military members committed atrocities against the local population. These actions reflect a lack of discipline in an environment that requires the highest standards. When reviewing the evidence of the four insurgent leaders, all but Sumter and Forrest on one conspicuous occasion maintained strict discipline within their organizations. This discipline allowed the insurgent leaders to conduct effective decentralized operations. Complex environments, like the modern battlefield require soldiers whose discipline induces them to react to orders without question.

Decentralized operations also require a high degree of trust up and down the chain of command. This trust must be earned. Leaders must display a high degree of confidence in their

[200] Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr., "Wake Up and Adapt, Incoming War College Chief Tells Army," http://defense.aol.com/ 2012/04/03/ wake-up-and-adapt-incoming-war-college-chief-tells-army (accessed 4 April 2012).
[201] Mao Tse-Tung, *On Protracted War, (*1938), 259.

actions to earn the trust of their subordinates. Subordinate leaders must likewise trust that their leaders can and will make the right decisions. The trust that Marion and Mosby shared with their superiors allowed them a high degree of autonomy in their operations. The contempt for authority displayed by Sumter and Forrest demonstrated a lack of trust. Only their superb performances on the battlefield allowed them to overcome this character flaw. Not only does lack of trust degrade on-going operations, the visible lack of respect can have adverse repercussions on the discipline and overall effectiveness of the entire organization. Thus, the contemporary military leader must recognize that discipline and trust are absolutely essential in the decentralized environment.

The decentralized nature of modern warfare creates numerous challenges for today's leaders. It requires a solid base of training and education. The four insurgent leaders examined here all possessed the uncommon quality of natural military genius. These men were able to overcome their limited education and military experience. Modern warfare requires leaders who can employ existing technology in conjunction with an analytical mind to solve complex problems. The complexity of the modern battlefield requires innovative, free-thinking leaders able to cope with multiple problems. Education and leadership development are therefore critical to creating the necessary skills to operate on the modern battlefield. "In today's complex operational environment, an individual's ability to understand, learn, and adapt is the key to being successful."[202] While genius is rare and cannot be taught, many of the traits these leaders exhibited can and must be applied to the training of current and future leaders.

Contemporary leaders must also understand the need for a holistic balance between conventional and irregular forces. As demonstrated in this study, irregular operations can be effective when employed in concert with conventional forces. As Anthony Joes opined, "symbiotic cooperation between regular forces and guerrillas can generate tremendous power, and nothing better illustrates this principle than the Carolina campaign."[203] In recent years, conventional forces have enabled success for counterterrorism efforts. Additionally, special operations forces have been effectively employed to support the conventional effort. As the

[202] William E. Raymond, Jr., Keith R. Beurskens, and Steven M. Carmichael, "The Criticality of Captain's Education: Now and in the Future," *Military Review* Vol. 90, No. 6 (November-December 2010), 51.
[203] Anthony James Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 42.

intimacy of this mutual relationship becomes clearer, modern leaders must seek to build and expand upon it.

Although many of the characteristics these men displayed were worthy of emulation, they also provided examples of unhelpful leadership traits. Leaders must understand the impetus for going to war. They must understand the desired political outcome and ensure the strategy employs ways and means to reach that end. "Self-managing leaders must effectively focus and control their thinking and emotions to better control themselves and lead their soldiers."[204] While these men were successful in their operations, when they allowed emotion to motivate action the results were much less auspicious.

All four men took some actions that reduced their effectiveness. The burning of Sumter's home was doubtless the impetus that brought him back to the fight and revenge rivaled his patriotism for the purpose of his insurgent effort. Marion's policy of shooting pickets in retaliation for the capture of one of his officers was emotionally motivated. Forrest's outspoken disdain for his superiors further eroded an already fractured Confederate cause. Mosby was also noted to have hung Union prisoners in response to the Union policy of hanging insurgents. These actions, in addition to many others, serve as warning to the negative implications of allowing emotion to overwhelm maturity and good judgment and motivate action in combat.

While the phrase "gaining the support of the populace" has become an overused cliché, it is nevertheless an important concept for contemporary leaders to understand. As fighting shifts toward urban terrain, non-combatants will increasingly influence the way wars are fought. Leaders must therefore understand the role the population plays in insurgent warfare.

Undermining popular support for the opposition is critical to both sides in an insurgency. The populace must be and feel protected, and people will generally support the side providing that support.[205] Sumter's policy of pillaging loyalists runs counter to this principle. While Marion was able to co-opt loyalists, Sumter's policy probably bolstered loyalist support for the British. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have provided similar examples of how these types of attacks against the populace can negate positive efforts. Leaders must therefore understand these implications and work diligently to prevent these actions.

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[204] Joe Doty and Jeffrey E. Fenlason, "*Real* Lessons Learned for Leaders after Years of War," *Military Review*, March-April 2012, 88.

[205] The US Army & Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 238.

Mosby's inability to protect the local population from the Union's counterinsurgent campaign provides contemporary leaders another example of the importance of securing the populace. As Union forces burned crops and confiscated livestock, the people on whom Mosby relied were forced to seek refuge elsewhere. In not securing the population, Mosby lost much of his support network and the devastation eventually eroded support for secession. While Mosby's limited force could not have been expected to defend the entire Shenandoah Valley against Sheridan's destruction, the case demonstrates that the inability to protect the population can result in the loss of popular support. This example applies equally for contemporary counterinsurgent forces.

Although America has a long history of insurgent warfare, it does not fit clearly into the American culture of quick wars, conducted at minimal cost of lives and treasure. "Americans have never felt comfortable in unconventional situations. Success has always been the result of improvisation, failure the result of ignorance of the true nature of the enemy plus war-weariness all around. Those successes that did occur, in turn, were seldom passed on and they were not incorporated into official policy. They were simply forgotten, either conveniently or deliberately—or both."[206] The men examined in this work are thus distinctly relevant to today's military leaders.

Enlightened contemporary leaders will use this study as an introduction to Marion, Sumter, Forrest, and Mosby. They will derive useful insights from these men's lives, operations, and leadership qualities – both positive and negative. And they will use those insights to develop the culturally attuned, strategically aware, and productively adaptive leaders the nation so desperately needs in today's complex world.

[206] John J. Tierney, Jr., *Chasing Ghosts: Unconventional Warfare in American History*, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2006), 259.

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